

Algeria's FIS threatens to end unilateral ceasefire

LONDON (AFP) — The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) threatened on Tuesday to call an end to the unilateral ceasefire of its armed wing if local elections in Algeria later this month fail to break the political impasse there.

The banned Islamist group announced last month a ceasefire in Algeria from Oct. 1 by its armed wing which has been fighting to overthrow the authorities in Algeria for the last five years.

"The hall is in the court of the regime now that the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS) has laid down its weapons and is ready to enter the political arena," Djaffer El Houari, a member of the FIS executive told Agence France Presse.

But he warned: "If the situation remains unchanged, the AIS will draw its own

conclusions. If all the political doors are closed, it is not necessary to wait for (the regime) to offer a bouquet of flowers, the armed fight will be legitimate defence."

Local elections due to be held this Thursday are seen by the government as the final piece of institutional rebuilding after a presidential poll in 1995, a constitutional referendum in 1996 and June's parliamentary elections.

Despite the release earlier this year of FIS leader Sheikh Ahassi Madani, no progress has been made towards bringing the banned group back into the political mainstream.

However, the vote comes amid growing tension and violence with several reports of clashes between the more radical Armed Islamist Group and the

army. At least 10 candidates standing in Thursday's election have also been killed in recent days.

The AIS said it had called October's ceasefire in order to expose the role of the GIA in the series of bloody massacres that occurred in recent months in which hundreds died.

According to El Houari the GIA is still active in the east and west of the country where it has an underground guerrilla group. He added that the group which could have as many as 15,000 fighters were little present around the capital.

In 1992, the FIS was banned by the government after it cancelled general elections the FIS was sure to win, sparking the Islamist anti-government campaign in which an estimated 65,000 have died.

Since being banned, the

FIS has played no part in mainstream politics and fielded no candidates in the various elections held since 1995.

Of late, it has called for a boycott of the local vote but is also looking to the international community to help find a solution to end the violence in Algeria.

"The good offices of the international community are essential for putting pressure on the regime so that the crisis in Algeria can be solved through political means," El Houari said.

"France, Great Britain and the United States have the means to put pressure on the Algerian regime," he added.

One of the party's other demands is for an international investigation into the massacres that have claimed the lives of so many civilians and others during the crisis.



A militant of the Algerian party National Gathering for Democracy (RND) pastes a poster on an electoral billboard in Algiers on Tuesday. Campaigning is underway prior to the Algerian municipal election scheduled for October 23 (Reuters photo)

Egypt's Musa assails Israeli 'brute force'

TEL AVIV (R) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa slammed Israel on Monday for "provocative policies of brute force" that he said were eroding the chances of reaching a peace deal with the Palestinians.

Mr. Musa unleashed his withering attack on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government while in Israel for the gala inauguration of the Peres Centre for Peace, a private institute established by Nobel Peace laureate Shimon Peres.

"The Middle East stands today at a very dangerous crossroads," Mr. Musa told scores of Israeli, Palestinian and foreign dignitaries in a Tel Aviv hotel.

Mr. Musa blamed Mr. Netanyahu, who ousted Israel's dovish Labour government in 1996, for stalling on carrying out the historic interim Palestinian-Israeli peace deals of which Mr. Peres was an architect.

"To delay the implementation of agreements is to render them meaningless...telling all of us not to rely too much on understandings reached or agreements signed," Mr. Musa said.

Mr. Netanyahu did not attend the ceremony.

Mr. Musa accused Mr. Netanyahu of eroding the territorial viability of the West Bank and Gaza — captured by Israel in 1967 and wanted by Palestinians for a future state — by expanding Jewish settlements and confiscating Arab lands.

"Provocative policies of

brute force which kindle the fire of frustration and despair must be abandoned," the minister said. "Let us not forget that despair and frustration are the midwives of violence."

He said Jewish settlements were eroding "the possibility of reaching any settlement at all" and backed a U.S. call for an Israeli "time-out" to settlement construction in order to relaunch peace talks on a final Palestinian-Israeli peace.

He earlier had a brief meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy but stressed that his visit was an unofficial one whose main purpose was the opening of the peace centre.

"We hope that there is something new and serious that will indicate to us and the region that peace is moving forward but until now we do not see any indication of that," Mr. Musa told reporters with Mr. Levy at his side.

The Egyptian diplomat said the burden was on Israel's shoulders to restore the confidence needed to advance the faltering peace process.

"It is your government that bears the greater share of responsibility in restoring this faith that has been lost because of negative policies," Mr. Musa said in his address.

Palestinian-Israeli peace moves ground to a halt last March when Mr. Netanyahu gave the green light to build a new Jewish settlement on the hilltop of Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab east Jerusalem.

Hamas denies report that millions embezzled from its accounts

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Hamas denied Tuesday reports that some of the group's leaders had embezzled \$30 million in contributions from sympathisers around the world.

"Hamas denies this report and affirms that the only reason for such invented stories is to harm the movement and to sabotage its political and operational victories which have

embarrassed the Zionist enemy," the group said in a statement faxed to news organisations.

Hamas, acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement, was responding to an article published Monday in the Italian newspaper Corriere Della Sera reporting that leaders of the movement based outside the Palestinian territories had siphoned off \$30 mil-

lion from the group's accounts.

The sum represents half the \$60 million collected annually to support Hamas' social and religious programmes as well as its violent campaign of opposition to peace accords with Israel.

The Corriere Della Sera said Hamas leaders in the West Bank and Gaza Strip discovered that the funds

were missing early this year after noticing a fall off in contributions reaching their institutions.

The newspaper said the Hamas leadership interrogated Imad Alami, powerful head of the movement's Damascus office, about the whereabouts of the missing money and the activities of two London-based media groups, Al Quds Press and Interpal, which allegedly

serve as front groups for Hamas fundraising.

The Hamas statement released Tuesday said the movement had no connection to either Al Quds Press or Interpal.

According to Corriere Della Sera, an internal Hamas investigation found that large sums of money had been siphoned off into the personal accounts of officials abroad and had

been used among other things to buy property in Europe, South America and Asia.

Hamas is the biggest opposition group to the Palestinian National Authority and has killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings and other attacks since President Yasser Arafat reached his first peace agreement with Israel in 1993.

Palestinian wounded in Beirut attack dies

BEIRUT (R) — A former Palestinian guerrilla who Monday was shot with his brother in Beirut by gunmen using silenced pistols died of his wounds overnight, security sources said Tuesday.

The sources said Nassereddine Mohammad Banna died in hospital. His brother, Omar, died instantly when two unidentified gunmen opened fire on their car with pistols

carrying silenced Monday.

The sources said Monday the two were members of the Fateh Revolutionary Council (FRC) led by guerrilla leader Sabri Banna, or Abu Nidal, who is wanted by international intelligence agencies for allegedly carrying out attacks on Israeli and Western targets.

But Prosecutor General Adnan Bitar said Tuesday initial investigations showed that the slain men

were relatives of Abu Nidal but had quit his group and arrived in Lebanon from Libya 10 months ago.

No one has been detained in connection with the case, Mr. Bitar told reporters.

The two brothers have been selling vegetables in a Beirut market since arriving in Lebanon, the security sources said.

The FRC, which is violently opposed to peace

negotiations with Israel, split from Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's mainstream Fateh movement in 1973.

Inter-Palestinian feuds have claimed the lives of several officials and members of rival groups in Lebanon in recent years. Lebanon is home to 356,000 Palestinian refugees confined to 12 camps.

Israel rules out unilateral pullback from Lebanon

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai on Tuesday ruled out withdrawing Israeli troops unilaterally from the Jewish state's self-declared security zone in south Lebanon.

"From the information I have and from what I hear and know, we have no such option," Mr. Mordechai told Israel's army radio.

"We don't have the luxury to carry out a unilateral action with the implication of possibly endangering communities on the northern border," he said.

Mr. Mordechai, regarded as a moderate in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government, said a pullback without an agreement with the Lebanese government could force Israel "to later wage a much heavier battle."

Israel carved out its self-declared "security" zone in south Lebanon in 1985 to

prevent guerrillas from making cross-border attacks.

Hizbollah fighters, fighting to oust Israel from the zone, have killed 39 Israeli soldiers this year — more than in any other single year since 1985 — prompting calls in Israel for a unilateral withdrawal.

Lebanese leaders have rejected Mr. Netanyahu's offer to have Lebanon deploy troops in the south and disarm Hizbollah in exchange for an Israeli pullout, insisting Israel simultaneously withdraw from the Golan Heights captured from Syria in 1967.

Lebanon has repeatedly rejected any agreement with Israel for a withdrawal from south Lebanon that doesn't include a return by Israel of the Golan Heights to Syria.

Mr. Netanyahu is on record as opposing a withdrawal from the strategic Heights.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10.....Jonny Quest
14:30.....Super Dave
15:00.....Secrets of Treasure Island
15:30.....Super Dave
16:00.....Monsters Today
16:30.....Border Town
17:00.....French Programmes
19:00.....News in French
19:30.....News Headlines
19:35.....News Headlines
20:00.....Grace Under Fire
20:30.....Challenges
21:10.....Kung Fu 3
22:00.....News in English
22:30.....Land's End
23:15.....American Gothic
23:59.....End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:22.....Fajr
05:40.....(Sunrise)Duba
11:20.....Dhuhr
14:31.....'Asr
17:01.....Maghreb
18:18.....'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifheh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terza Sancta Church Tel. 623666

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 5516245

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404

The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

It will be relatively cold, skies partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers, and winds westerly moderate to active. In

Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman.....11/19

Aqaba.....17/27

Deserts.....10/22

Jordan Valley.....16/26

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 19, Aqaba 25 Humid-

ity readings: Amman 40 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

Dr. Wissam Hazyayin.....748563

Dr. Mukhlis Mazahrah.....820425

Dr. Hatim Hannoun.....674984

Dr. Munther Al Qatani 779959

Firas pharmacy.....661912

Ferdows pharmacy.....890280

Al Asema pharmacy.....637055

Al Salam pharmacy.....636730

Yacoub pharmacy.....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairookh pharmacy.....623672

Najib pharmacy.....847632

IRBID:

Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja.....252970

Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Salah Saffarini.....987565

Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre.....637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192. 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade.....617101

Blood Bank.....775121

Highway Police.....843402

Traffic Police.....896390

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6

Akileh Maternity, 642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman.....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 66727/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints.....605800

Price Complaints.....661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints.....897467

Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121

Overseas Calls.....010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television.....773111

Radio Jordan.....774111

Water Authority.....680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:05.....Damascus (RJ)

08:25 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

08:30.....Jeddah (RJ)

09:15.....Larnaca (RJ)

14:55 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

16:30.....Madrid (RJ)

17:05.....Paris (RJ)

17:05.....Istanbul (RJ)

17:40.....Brussels, Geneva (RJ)

18:05.....Rome (RJ)

18:10.....London, Berlin (RJ)

18:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)

23:15.....Beirut (RJ)

00:05.....Cairo (RJ)

DEPARTURES

07:00.....Larnaca (RJ)

08:00 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

09:50.....Rome (RJ)

10:45.....Berlin, London (RJ)

11:45.....Istanbul (RJ)

19:25.....Colombo (RJ)

19:35.....Beirut (RJ)

20:00.....New Delhi (RJ)

20:10.....Cairo (RJ)

20:10.....Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)

20:45.....Bangkok (RJ)

20:50.....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)

21:05.....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)

22:45.....Sanaa (RJ)

are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

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China warns U.S. over Taiwan ahead of summit

BEIJING (AFP) — China warned the United States Tuesday the issue of Taiwan remained critical for Beijing ahead of the summit meeting between President Jiang Zemin and his U.S. counterpart Bill Clinton.

It also called on the United States to lift sanctions on nuclear power cooperation ahead of the Oct. 29 summit and brushed off the impact of demonstrations on human rights and Tibet.

"We think the question of Taiwan is a critical issue," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang. "During President Jiang Zemin's visit to the United States, he will discuss this with U.S. officials," he added.

While China puts the nationalist island of Taiwan as the number one obstacle to improved ties, the United States is pushing for improved human rights and an opening of markets to redress its massive trade deficit.

However, both sides have moved towards a broader picture of cooperation in the last 18 months and repeatedly state that no one issue will be allowed to sour the whole relationship.

Expectations are also high the United States may use the summit to lift sanctions on the transfer of nuclear power technology to China which were imposed in 1989 after the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Washington's top negotiator on the nuclear ban, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Bob Einhorn, arrived here last Sunday and is in intensive negotiations, U.S. embassy sources said.

While U.S. officials warn an imminent agreement is not guaranteed, an ending of the ban has been widely tipped to coincide with Mr. Jiang's Washington visit and China has already

offered to boost its transparency with end-user certification.

"The view of the Chinese government is that to come to an agreement on this issue before the Jiang visit will be beneficial to ties," Mr. Shen said, adding it would also provide a "great

boost" to economic and trade ties and start to redress the trade deficit.

But he appeared to reject U.S. demands to release top dissidents, saying this was entirely a matter for the judicial departments.

"The government will not interfere and cannot inter-

vene," he said.

He also brushed off demonstrations planned for Mr. Jiang's state visit saying human rights activists would have no impact on the success of the trip.

"Demonstrations are very commonplace in the United States ... We are sure the U.S. government will adopt measures to ensure the visit of President Jiang Zemin is a success," he said.

Sino-U.S. relations are currently enjoying a rebirth following almost a decade of roller-coaster ties sparked by the Tiananmen Square demonstrations and wrangling over Taiwan.

The nationalist island split from mainland China in 1949 at the end of a bitter civil war and was recognised by Washington as the legitimate government of all China until 1979.

But it has continued to divide Beijing and Washington, and disputes, culminated in 1995 with the visit of Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to the United States.

The following year, the U.S. Navy dispatched two aircraft carriers to the Taiwan Strait during provocative war exercises there by Beijing which raised regional tensions.

"We have noted that U.S. officials have recently said they will follow the principles" of the one-China policy, Mr. Shen said.

"The question of Taiwan has always been the most sensitive issue in the Sino-U.S. relationship ... and we hope the U.S. will strictly abide by its commitments," he added.

China and the United States have signed three joint communiqués dealing mainly with Taiwan, but both sides have ruled out a fourth joint communiqué on the subject during the visit.

U.N. mission peeks inside China's gulag

GENEVA (AFP) — A ground-breaking U.N. human rights mission has visited some 30 convicts in China, during a fact-finding trip to prisons that once were off-limits to foreigners, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

Political prisoners were among those interviewed by two members of the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, but it was unclear if they included high-profile dissidents such as Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan, said the spokesman, John Mills.

Comprising the working group's Chairman Kapil Sibal, from India, and vice chairman Louis Joinet, from France, the mission wound up its 11-day trip — conducted at Beijing's invitation — Thursday.

It was the first such mission by U.N. experts on arbitrary detention, and this was being seen as a step towards better cooperation between China and the international community on the thorny issue of human rights.

It had been preceded by an advance trip by Mr. Joinet last year, and by a 1993 visit by a U.N. rapporteur focusing on religious freedoms.

Mr. Sibal and Mr. Joinet notably got into prisons which had never before been visited by foreign delegations.

These visits had been authorised following negotiations with Chinese leaders who accepted changes to a scheduled which they had first proposed, Mr. Mills said.

The U.N. envoys were able to meet in private with prisoners of their choice. Overall, some 30 inmates, including political prisoners, were interviewed, Mr. Mills said.

In Tibet, scene of popular discontent with Chinese rule, Mr. Sibal and Mr. Joinet met four or five prisoners out of a list which they had submitted to the government, he added. Their travels took them to Beijing, Shanghai, the Tibetan capital Lhasa, and Chengdu, capital city of the southwestern province of Sichuan.

They sat in on a trial in Beijing and held meetings with officials of China's supreme court, prosecutors' service, and ministries of justice, public security and foreign affairs.

They also met judges, prosecutors, lawyers and legal specialists. The prisons they visited were in Shanghai and Lhasa, while in Chengdu they inspected a facility for young detainees, and a reeducation centre for women in Shanghai.

The envoys are to submit a report to the next meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in Geneva next March.

Searchers find Indonesian crash black boxes

JAKARTA (AFP) — Investigators have found the black box recorders from a Garuda Airbus A-300B4 which crashed in North Sumatra on Sept. 26 killing all 234 people on board, an airline official said Tuesday.

"The two recorders were found under some one metre of soil, the voice recorder at 11:45 a.m. (0445 GMT) and the flight data recorder at 2:45 p.m.," a Garuda official who declined to be named told AFP from Medan, North Sumatra.

The official, who is closely involved with the search efforts, declined to provide other details, referring enquiries to the Medan Garuda office.

The staff at the Garuda office could not immediately confirm the report, saying that the head of the office was out attending a meeting.

The Airbus crashed into a mountain in a smog-hit valley as it was approaching Medan on Sept. 26.

The crash was the worst in Indonesia's aviation history. The search for the flight data and voice recorders has been carried out with the assistance of experts from France, Britain and Australia.

Hundreds of soldiers, police, officials and civilian volunteers have combed the muddy valley where the aircraft crashed looking for the recorders, which are vital to

determining the cause of the crash.

They have so far unearthed soil over an area of some 750 square metres in search of the boxes, the head of the Medan air base, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Dandel, was quoted by the Antara news agency as saying.

The accident took place in poor visibility of around 400 metres, with the area blanketed by thick smog caused by widespread forest fires. The leader of the National Air Crash Investigation Commission, Utuyo Diran, has said if found the black boxes will be sent abroad as Indonesia does not have facilities to process the data in the recorders.

Australian MP presents 'explosive' files on alleged paedophiles

SYDNEY (AFP) — An Australian legislator Tuesday presented "explosive" documents to the state parliament here about alleged prominent paedophiles whom she said were at the heart of a cover-up.

A tearful Franca Arena did not name names when she presented four folders in the New South Wales upper house, but said they contained "explosive material."

The documents were referred to the police and were not immediately made available to MPs.

Ms. Arena, who was applauded from the public gallery, asked for a national inquiry into sexual abuse of children to be set up.

Ms. Arena said she had received seven boxes of evidence from paedophile victims in recent years, from which she was submitting four folders to parliament.

Two related to allegations of child sex abuse and

included victims' statements, she said. Ms. Arena said the documents led her to believe that a state royal commission headed by Judge James Wood "omitted to investigate some high profile paedophiles — people who have been called untouchables."

In August, the Wood inquiry concluded that generations of Australian children had suffered enormous harm as police and authorities turned a blind eye to sex abuse by people including clergymen, church officials and teachers.

Ms. Arena had previously told journalists that material in the files related to alleged paedophile activity by politicians in the state parliament, judges and other "prominent" people.

Under parliamentary privilege last month, Ms. Arena alleged there had been a secret deal involving state premier Bob Carr, state

opposition leader Peter Collins and Wood to suppress the names of high-profile paedophiles.

"There won't be any cover-up," Attorney-General Jeff Shaw told the upper house.

He said state Police Commissioner Peter Ryan would examine material in the folders and "if there is evidence then it's a matter for the police and the courts."

After Mr. Ryan reports back, the house will decide on who can have access to the files, he said.

Mr. Carr has set up an inquiry headed by retired Judge John Nader to look into Ms. Arena's cover-up allegations.

During Wood's investigation, Ms. Arena used parliamentary privilege to name retired Supreme Court Judge David Yeldham as a paedophile.

Yeldham later killed himself.

Anti-cancer drug may have killed 30 Japanese

TOKYO (AFP) — An Italian anti-cancer drug may have killed 30 Japanese patients suffering from leukaemia during chemotherapy due to its strong side effects, the Health and Welfare Ministry said Tuesday.

Since the drug "Idamycin" was first introduced to Japan in June 1995, doctors have used it on some 500 leukaemia patients and 30 have died of septicaemia and pneumonia, a ministry official said.

Idamycin, which is in use in nearly 70 countries, prevents cancer cells from proliferating and is usually used on patients with acute myelocytic leukaemia, the official said.

"The use of Idamycin and other anti-cancer drugs can prolong the life of patients suffering from acute myelocytic leukaemia for another few years," he said.

But the drug can damage to healthy cells by lowering the number of white blood cells and blood platelets, deteriorating the function of bone marrow and weakening patients' resistance, he said.

After the 30 deaths, the ministry has told doctors to use the drug "with the utmost care and attention" and ordered a company that distributed it to report on every case involving the drug, the official said.

Kyodo News said about 6,000 Japanese die of leukaemia each year and roughly half suffer from myelocytic leukaemia.



A huge skip is delivered to a house in the Molenbeek district of the Belgian capital as investigations continue following the discovery of human remains under a concrete floor (AFP photo)

Grisly murders shock Belgium once more

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgium has its share of violent crime, but the discovery of bones and frozen meat of uncertain origin in houses owned by a Hungarian-born Protestant vicar generated a rash of grisly headlines Tuesday.

"Meat in the freezer, blood on the walls," said Gazer Van Aantwerpen. "A house of horror in Molenbeek," said Le Soir.

Het Belang Van Limburg went further. "Human flesh in the freezer," it splashed across its front page.

Police arrested Andreas Pandey, 70, a naturalised Belgian, late last week after a coordinated search with their Hungarian colleagues failed to find any trace of his two former wives and four of his eight children.

Jos Colpin, spokesman for the Brussels public prosecutor, told reporters Monday that Mr. Pandey was suspected of having murdered the six, who disappeared without trace in the late 1980s.

Mr. Pandey, who gives lessons in religion in several

Brussels schools, has always insisted they went back to Hungary and he denies killing them.

Police searches of his three houses in Brussels have uncovered several bones, including a human femur, and two refrigerators packed with meat of unknown origin. Blood was found on a stairway.

The discoveries, particularly the meat in the fridges, were reminiscent of the accidental find in August last year of the bodies of three women in the freezers of a popular Lebanese restaurant in Brussels. One of the bodies had been cut in half.

At the same time, the sight of Belgian police yet again digging in the basement of a house provoked not only comparisons with Britain's "house of horrors" murders earlier this decade, but also a series of paedophile-related murders revealed over the past year in Belgium.

Such events involving missing children and discoveries of bones and body parts

have remained fresh in people's minds and provoked outrage when they came to light. They are also part of a wider spate of violent crimes in Belgium.

A series of 28 daylight murders at supermarkets, known as the "Brabant killings", in the Francophone south of the country in the middle and late 1980s has never been solved. Nor has the 1991 gunning down of Socialist Party Patriarch André Cools.

A report published Monday by an all-party parliamentary commission investigating the investigations of the Brabant killings ruled out the popular theory they had been committed by a right-wing faction trying to destabilise the country.

It also said there was no proof of another popular theory that they had been the work of a faction within the paramilitary gendarmerie, and suggested more attention be paid to a number of armed and violent gangs active at the time.

Race against the clock to find kidnap victim in Italy

ROME (AFP) — Italian police Tuesday were racing against time to find alive an Italian industrialist held hostage since June following the arrest of four men suspected of kidnapping him.

The four were arrested late Monday after a chase along the Rome-Aquila highway that ended in a shootout in a tunnel north of the Italian capital.

Three of the suspects were wounded in the gun-battle, one of them seriously.

They are suspects in the kidnapping of industrialist Giuseppe Soffiantini, 62, who was abducted by three armed men from his villa near Brescia on June 17.

According to initial reports, one of the suspects agreed to cooperate with police who were focusing their search in an area between Sienna and Grosseto, in Tuscany, in hopes of finding the place where Soffiantini was being held.

Police posing as the hostages' family members tried to trap the kidnappers Friday during a ransom hand-over but the operation failed and one police officer was shot and killed.

Sources close to the investigation said the family had convinced the kidnappers after months of negotiations to lower the ransom demand from 20 billion lire (\$11.6 million) to 10 billion.

Hanoi bans toy guns to 'protect children'

HANOI (R) — Vietnam said Tuesday it was banning toy weapons to protect the minds of its children.

A Trade Ministry official told Reuters the ban, which covers bamboo and plastic swords, bows, rifles and grenade-shaped cigarette lighters, applied to both imported and locally produced toys.

"Those toys are dangerous and harmful," he said by telephone. "They cause a bad impact on children's psychology, and make them think of wars and violence."

Vietnam's Communist government regularly expresses concern about the impact of consumerism and outside influences on its young people.

'Japan's truth cult planned coup'

TOKYO (AFP) — Japan's Aum Supreme Truth cult planned to abduct the prime minister, attack the parliament building and spray deadly sarin gas from a helicopter in 1994, a former follower told a Tokyo court Tuesday.

The 31-year-old prosecution witness, whose identity was withheld, was testifying at the Tokyo District Court in the trial of former senior Aum member Kiyohide Hayakawa, Kyodo news agency reported.

Mr. Hayakawa, 48, once the Aum cult's second-highest member and its "construction minister," is charged with murder for the 1989 killing of a lawyer who helped sect families, his wife and their son from Yokohama.

The witness, a former member of the Maritime Self

Defense Force, said he quit the Aum cult in 1994 because he was "fed up" with the plan, which he described as outrageous, according to the news agency.

It was not clear which prime minister was targeted in the alleged coup plan. Japan had three prime ministers during 1994 — Morihiro Hosokawa, Tsutomu Hata and Tomiichi Murayama.

The witness quoted cult leader Shoko Asahara as saying he planned to take over the parliament, or Diet, and destroy riot police with trench mortars to seize political power.

Hideo Murai, Aum's top scientist who was stabbed to death in the cult's Tokyo office in April 1995, one month after the sect's infa-

mous attack on Tokyo's subway, had agreed with the Aum leader, describing it as a great plan, the witness said.

The former cult follower said he acquired helicopter licences in the United States and Russia to prepare for the gas spraying under orders from the Aum leader.

He told the court Mr. Asahara told him he would not leave the cult alive if he decided to quit.

Aum's top chemist, Masami Tsuchiya, 32, said in November 1993 it would be difficult to produce large amounts of sarin nerve gas although its scientists had produced small amounts of the gas in experiments, the witness said.

Mr. Tsuchiya is accused of murder in producing sarin gas.

Nursing home worker held for 22 deaths

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — A former nursing home employee was behind bars Tuesday charged with killing 22 elderly people, in what was being called the biggest euthanasia case ever in Denmark.

The 32-year-old nursing assistant is alleged to have murdered 15 women and seven men, aged 65 to 97, since August 1994 with lethal doses of tranquillizers, said Kurt Jensen, chief inspector of the Copenhagen criminal police unit.

She is also charged with diverting or stealing a total of 629,000 kroner (\$93,000) from bank accounts held by her alleged victims when they were still alive.

Arrested Monday, the woman — whose name cannot be published under Danish law — pleaded not guilty Tuesday when she appeared before prosecutors in Copenhagen.

"I had always given medication to ailing residents in accordance with doctors' prescriptions," said the suspect, who was laid off by the nursing home last March.

Only in "emergency cases" did she bend that rule, she added.

A doctor has also been linked in the affair, which police described as a case of "active euthanasia." She is accused of involuntary homicide and professional wrongdoing.

While it is just going before the courts, the case sent a chill through Denmark's hospice industry.

"Trust in the system for caring for the elderly has been badly shaken by this horrible affair," said Erik Lehm, president of Denmark's National Association of Senior Citizens' Homes.

"Active euthanasia is prohibited by law. We must remind administrators to be on the lookout for all suspicious deaths," he said.

The far-right Progress Party demanded that Denmark's health and social services ministers be summoned to testify before a parliamentary committee to cast light on the affair.

Situated in Vesterbro, a working-class district of Copenhagen, the nursing home now has 76 residents, plus a staff of around 100.

Its name was being protected by the court, but its director Ib Schultz said its residents and employees had been "deeply shocked" not only by the arrest, but also by what he called the "media invasion" of their facility.

Police said they uncovered the deaths by chance, while they were investigating the diversion of funds from a senior citizen's bank account and rumours of mysterious deaths in the retirement home.

World News

Nursing home worker held for 22 deaths

COPENHAGEN (AP) — A nursing home worker in Denmark was charged Tuesday with killing 22 elderly people, the police said. The woman, 42, was arrested on Monday and charged with 22 counts of murder. She is accused of poisoning the residents of a nursing home in the town of Slagelse, about 40 km from Copenhagen. The police said the woman had been working at the nursing home for several years. She was charged with killing 22 elderly people between 1994 and 1996. The police said the woman had been working at the nursing home for several years. She was charged with killing 22 elderly people between 1994 and 1996. The police said the woman had been working at the nursing home for several years. She was charged with killing 22 elderly people between 1994 and 1996.



Farmers released: North Korea said it had handed back two South Korean farmers Tuesday because U.S. officers had admitted "wrongdoings" in claiming that the pair had been kidnapped from the South last week. After the admission was made at contacts in the truce village of Panmunjom on Oct. 19 and 20 the North Korean side decided to repatriate them, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a dispatch monitored here. "The U.S. forces' side admitted its wrongdoings ... and so the DPRK decided to hand them" back, it said. The KCNA report coincided with a statement from the U.N. Command here that the farmers, an elderly woman and her son, had admitted accidentally crossing into the North last Friday through the Demilitarized Zone. "What South Korean military authorities sought in disarming the fact was to deliberately obstruct the solution of a humanitarian matter (and) aggravate inter-Korean relations," KCNA said. It said the North Korean army had warned the U.S. officers that "if the U.S. side failed to stop such racket, any contact for the solution of a humanitarian matter could not be held." (Renter photo)

Some 120,000 threatened by Indonesian drought

JAKARTA (AFP) — Some 120,000 people in Indonesia's easternmost province of Irian Jaya are now seriously threatened by drought which is causing food shortages, reports said here Tuesday. Half the population in the mountainous district of Puncak Jaya about 40,000 people in central Irian Jaya would face serious famine in the next two or three months, the head of the district, Ruben Ambraw, told the Kompas daily. The head of the neighbouring district of Jayawijaya, J.B. Wenas, has already said 90,000 people, or a fifth of the local population, were threatened by serious food shortages after the local crop was ruined by the prolonged drought. The drought has already killed 493 people in Irian Jaya, the Antara news agency said Sunday. It said 416 people died in the district of Jayawijaya, 60 people in the Merauke district and 17 people in Puncak Jaya district. Mr. Ambraw, who could not be reached by telephone Tuesday, told Kompas the most seriously affected sub-districts were Sinak and Ilaga where the local crop of yam and other tubers had been ruined by drought and hailstorms. The local tribes' high dependence on yam has left the population susceptible to changes in weather, and malnutrition has weakened resistance to illness, officials and experts have said. Since Aug. 5 only one tonne of rice has been sent to the stricken areas but much more was needed, Mr. Ambraw said. However, authorities had no aeroplanes or enough funds to rent aeroplanes to deliver further relief. A navy boat carrying rice, sugar, dried fish, cooking oil, milk, clothes and medicine for 2,000 people left the East Java town of Surabaya Monday bound for Irian Jaya, the Kompas daily said. Relief distribution in Irian Jaya have been hampered by the number of available planes, as well as the thick smoke from forest and ground fires in Irian Jaya which have blanketed several areas needing urgent relief. Most of the central range that covers the Jayawijaya and Puncakwajaya and the northern parts of the Merauke district are only accessible by air transport. The fires have already burned over 6,217 hectares of forest in the Lorentz national park, in Jayawijaya, officials have said. Forest and ground fires also killed one tribesman and severely burned two others when they spread to a village Lolat, and razed scores of houses there.

Renamed South Pacific Commission ends 50th anniversary meeting

CANBERRA (AFP) — The South Pacific Commission wrapped up its 50th anniversary conference here Tuesday with a new name, a new member and more optimism than the once-moribund regional body has seen in decades. But the essentially technical organisation, to be known as the Pacific Community from next year, did not aspire to a political role like that of its European counterpart, Director-General Bob Dun said. "In the future I am sure there is room to move to a community of nations in the Pacific which would have economic and political significance, but that would be some distance away," he said. Mr. Dun's appointment in 1995, after a tussle with New Zealand which ended a 20-year period where islanders had held the post, was much criticised at the time. However, the Australian's stewardship was endorsed Monday with an announcement that Britain was to rejoin a revitalised commission after a two-year absence. "You couldn't get a bigger vote of confidence really," Mr. Dun told reporters, adding that Chile was also interested in taking up membership. Although Britain had said its withdrawal was forced by budget cutbacks, High Commissioner to Australia, Andrew Pocock, told delegates that it had really been "concerned by the way in which the SPC was being managed." "We perceived a lack of direction, a lack of vision and clear objectives and in our view an alarming proportion of the members' contributions being spent on management," he said Monday. He paid tribute to the political will that had transformed the commission into a "vibrant and relevant deliverer of services which your island societies want." Mr. Dun, who was Tuesday appointed to another three-year term, admitted support for the forum had fallen away in the early part of the decade, amid Britain's departure and rumblings of discontent from the United States. Greater accountability and transparency introduced last year in a review of the organisation, which is dedicated to fostering development in the region, had laid the ground for this year's landmark conference, he said. "People told me that the Pacific would never accept the series of radical changes that we put to them ... but they did," he told AFP. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said changing the name of the commission to the Pacific Community was an effort to better include its northern Pacific members. The move, which was reached by consensus, was also backed as reflecting the involvement of the four metropolitan members — Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States. "It also signifies the importance and the existence of the organisation right down to the community or grassroots level in the Pacific," Papua New Guinea delegation leader Titus Philemon said Tuesday. As a non-political body, the conference did not discuss the contentious issue of global warming, despite the threat it posed to low-lying island states. Instead, its communiqué listed priorities for the next half-century as population growth, education, the spread of HIV and the sustainable use of forest and fishery stocks in a resource-poor region. Members of the Pacific Community are: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United States, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

1 killed, 3 injured in sectarian violence in Pakistani city

MULTAN, Pakistan (AFP) — One person was shot dead as violence erupted Tuesday in this Pakistani city amid tensions between two Sunni Muslims sects after the killing of four students, witnesses said. Three other people were also injured when shots were fired during a demonstration by hundreds of followers of the Brailvi sect as they passed by a religious school owned by the Deobandi sect, police sources said. The demonstrators were protesting after Brailvi banners were torn down in the city Monday, allegedly by followers of the Deobandi sect. It was not known who fired the shots. Police using tear-gas and batons dispersed the crowd. Paramilitary troops were later deployed in the troubled parts of the city, witnesses said. Four students from Deobandi religious schools were kidnapped Sunday and their bullet-riddled bodies were later found in the suburbs of the city, triggering tensions between the Sunni groups. The Deobandis blamed the other sect for the murders of the students, who were returning home from a three-day religious assembly organised in Multan by Dawat-i-Islami, an organisation belonging to Brailvis. The police has registered a case against unidentified terrorists for the killing of the four students. Multan is in the largest Pakistani province of Punjab, which has been rocked by nearly 200 sectarian killings this year in violence linked to tensions between militants from majority Sunni and minority Shiite Muslims.

Communist leader confirms censure motion dropped

MOSCOW (AFP) — Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov said Tuesday his party would drop a no-confidence motion against the cabinet, having won a series of concessions from the government. He announced the decision to journalists after a meeting of his party's parliamentary faction. "The faction discussed in detail the proposals of the government and the letter from the president, in which they promised to respond to all the matters we raised. We have decided to believe them. Thus we have decided to drop this question from the agenda tomorrow," he said referring to the censure motion. He said the decision had been approved unanimously by the party. The speaker of the Lower House, Gennady Seleznev, a Communist, had earlier met with Mr. Yeltsin who had told the faction leaders that the vote Wednesday would "show whether there will be political stability or whether there will be a bust-up," Interfax reported. "I think that neither the Russian people nor you and me need such a bust-up," Mr. Yeltsin said. The Kremlin meeting came a day after the government of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin neared a truce with the Duma, after making a series of concessions. The faction leaders who met Mr. Yeltsin included Mr. Seleznev, Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov, ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, the heads of the pro-government Our Home Is Russia bloc and the reformist Yabloko group headed by Grigory Yavlinsky. Describing the meeting with Mr. Yeltsin as "constructive," Mr. Seleznev said the president had backed all the points put forward by the Communists and their Duma allies — the Agrarians and People's Power faction. Mr. Zyuganov told ITAR-TASS that the participants in the Kremlin discussions agreed to hold their first roundtable meeting on Nov. 22. The roundtable will bring together Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Chernomyrdin, the speakers of both houses of parliament and the parliamentary faction leaders, Mr. Chernomyrdin said Tuesday. Mr. Seleznev said Mr. Yeltsin's plans to expand land privatisation — strongly opposed by the Communists — would be the first issue to be discussed at the roundtable. Mr. Zyuganov told ITAR-TASS that he was "satisfied with the talks with the president, and this dialogue should have been held earlier."

Papon confounds court with denial

BORDEAUX, France (AFP) — Alleged war criminal Maurice Papon confounded a French court by denying he ordered the arrest of Jews to be sent to Nazi death camps, amid a continuing political row over the trial Tuesday. At least one expert suggested that lawyers may have misinterpreted some of the mass of evidence gathered to prove his role in the deportation of over 1,500 Jews, saying documents signed by him may not be arrest warrants. The judges and civil parties have confused administrative minutes signed by Maurice Papon with the original arrest orders signed by his superior, prefect Maurice Sabatier, said historian Michel Berges. The 87-year-old former minister, who was in charge of "Jewish affairs" at the prefecture in Bordeaux in Nazi-occupied France, denied Monday having signed arrest warrants or deportation orders for any Jews during the war. And he defied prosecutors to produce evidence proving he did so. "I cannot let it be said that I myself sent orders for transfer to the Drancy centre," he said referring to the transit centre north of Paris where Jews were gathered before being sent off to Nazi death camps. The comments appeared to run counter to prosecutors' affirmations that Mr. Papon's signature on documents ordering the deportation of Jews from Bordeaux was an undisputed matter of fact. Mr. Berges, professor of political science at Bordeaux university, said documents presented by prosecutors showed that Mr. Papon had only signed minutes after convoys of Jews had been sent to Drancy — and not arrest warrants. He said that only Mr. Papon's boss the prefect of Bordeaux had the authority to sign such orders. "There is flagrant confusion over the convicts escorted by military police, but they have confused all the documents. The case is collapsing," he said. Meanwhile a political row over the Bordeaux trial continued to flare in Paris, with one Gaullist leader implicitly accusing the ruling leftwing government of fuelling the row to suit their electoral purposes.

Hillary Clinton crusades for women's rights

WASHINGTON (AFP) — First Lady Hillary Clinton continued her crusade for women's rights here Monday fresh from a triumphant visit to Latin America. She kept up the feminist drumbeat as she denounced violence against women during a conference organised by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). "We do not believe violence against women is simply cultural, it is simply criminal," she said to applause. She denounced violence against women as "one of the most serious and unreported human rights violations." She also asserted that "violence against women is now being addressed as being part of American foreign policy." Mrs. Clinton's positions have often been criticised in the United States, notably by religious conservatives who denounce her views on abortion. But that condemnation was absent during last week's trip. As President Bill Clinton touted the benefits of free trade, his wife brought women's issues to the forefront, speaking out against spousal abuse and talked of the need for family planning and laws protecting women. In the sumptuous Colon Theatre in Buenos Aires, Mrs. Clinton created a sensation when she defended women's rights to birth control and abortion. These subjects are considered all but taboo in overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Argentina, and Mrs. Clinton's proposal for all women to have access to health and family planning services was embraced by Argentine feminists. In Brazil, Mrs. Clinton seemed particularly struck by programmes launched by local authorities to defend women against violence, especially programmes launched in the country's poorest areas. But despite last week's accolades, Latin America faces a steep uphill battle when it comes to achieving women's rights, according to a recent IDB report. In Chile, nearly 60 per cent of women are subjected to violence by their male partners and 10 per cent are victims of extreme violence, the IDB says. In Colombia more than 20 per cent of women have suffered physical violence while in Ecuador 60 per cent of women in the poor areas of the capital Quito have been beaten by their male partners. Mrs. Clinton said the problem also affects developed countries, citing a survey by the independent Institute for Civil Society which says 30 million American women suffer violence at the hands of their male partners. The first lady said 20 per cent of women treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms were victims of spousal abuse, adding that according to the World Bank violence against women cost the world economy as much as treating diseases like cancer, heart disease, or AIDS. Nonetheless, Mrs. Clinton expressed faith in the nascent democratic tide that has swept across Latin America in recent years, creating or strengthening laws protecting women. Mrs. Clinton, who celebrates her 50th anniversary next week, will preside over an upcoming children's conference at the White House.

Sri Lankan Buddhists warn 'peace plan' will bring more war

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka's influential Buddhist clergy Tuesday renewed their opposition to the government's constitutional reforms and warned the plans could further escalate the drawn out ethnic war. A group of top monks announced plans to launch a nationwide campaign to oppose the power-sharing arrangements which seek to turn the country into a de facto federal state. Leading monk, Madulawawe Sobitha, said the government proposals sought to devolve power on ethnic lines that could trigger hatred among communities and lead to further bloodshed. "The real ethnic war will begin if these proposals are implemented," Mr. Sobitha told reporters here as the government prepared Tuesday to hold crucial talks on the political package. The monks said the Tamil war led by the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) should be addressed militarily while powers should be devolved to address concerns of the minorities. Another leading priest, Itanape Dammalankara, said the government's constitutional reforms were not a guarantee of peace and they did not believe that Tiger supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran will agree to talk. "Prabhakaran is not a man who will understand the meaning of negotiations. Talking peace to him is like asking Hitler to negotiate," Mr. Dammalankara said. He said Wednesday's huge bombing in the capital Colombo was a clear signal that Mr. Prabhakaran was opposed to any kind of peaceful settlement to the conflict which has claimed over 50,000 lives since 1972. The monks, who are all members of the majority Sinhalese community, said they supported the idea of devolution of power on economic and geographical lines but opposed dividing regions on the lines of ethnicity. The government has said sweeping constitutional reforms aimed at ending the drawn out Tamil separatist war will be unveiled in parliament shortly. Justice and Constitutional Affairs Minister G. L. Peiris will present in about a week the interim findings of an all-party parliamentary panel after holding talks with legislators Tuesday, political sources said. The plan seeks to grant greater autonomy to minority Tamils and for the first time envisages a separate council for the country's second largest minority, the Muslims in the multi-ethnic eastern part of the country. The LTTE, which has been blamed for Wednesday's truck bombing here, has rejected reforms while hard-liners among the majority Sinhalese also oppose it for different reasons. President Chandrika Kumaratunga, a member of the Sinhalese community, told reporters here Friday she was willing to negotiate on her devolution package "even with the devil" and offered to stop the government's military campaign if rebels agreed to talk. Security forces are currently leading a major offensive against the rebels in the north of the country where more than 2,000 people have been killed in the past five months. Within hours of Wednesday's bombing which devastated the main financial centre for a second time in 20 months, ruling party legislators met at a conference hall to discuss the peace plan. Political sources close to the governing People's Alliance (PA) said ruling party legislators were in broad agreement on devolution but there were differences about the details. The same problem is shared by the main opposition United National Party (UNP) which is divided on the peace plan. The UNP's parliamentary support is crucial to realise reforms that also seek to scrap the country's all-powerful executive presidency and turn the country into a Westminster style parliamentary democracy. Tamil legislators oppose carving Muslim and Sinhalese areas out of the existing eastern province.

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Fairness before treaty

THE GENERAL Assembly of the International Police Organisation (Interpol) passed a resolution at its 66th meeting, which was held in New Delhi recently, recommending to the U.N. the adoption of a binding global extradition treaty in order to fight terrorism more effectively. By doing this, Interpol was requesting an international legal status for its "red corner notices." This would mean that the "notices" of Interpol would have the legal effect of an international arrest warrant that all countries should respect and implement. The New Delhi conference noted that the existing reliance on bilateral extradition treaties has "not yielded satisfactory results."

In principle, an enforceable global extradition pact would indeed be a useful tool to fight not only terrorism but also crimes against humanity, including war crimes. This is not to mention ordinary crimes committed by people who flee the jurisdiction where the crime was perpetrated.

But an important concern here is the control over the extradition policy of Interpol once this international treaty goes into effect. We cannot allow a repeat of the bitter experiences that small and vulnerable countries suffered in the past as a result of double standards used by the international community in dealing with grave and systematic violations including in the field of human rights. In the absence of iron-clad assurances that any such international extradition convention would apply one universal standard on all states, big or small, any movement in that direction could be fraught with dangers to weaker, smaller nations.

Before countries could be persuaded to walk that extra mile to extradite their nationals accused of the commission of crimes, they need to know well in advance the composition and mandate of the Interpol body which would be assigned the task of formulating the guidelines and the adoption of the necessary decisions on extradition. Until and unless this form of guarantee is well-articulated and incorporated, countries can be excused from rushing into adopting an ambitious international plan to fight criminals.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm criticised Jordan for almost solely among Arab countries pushing hard towards attending the Doha economic summit next month saying that the Kingdom is acting against the unanimous stand of the Arab states that oppose the coming meeting. Nicola Nasser said the rest of the Arab countries led by Syria believe that the Doha meeting in which the Jewish state will be represented would be a reward for Israel for its continued aggression on Arab countries and its occupation of Arab land. By inviting Israel to the meeting and allowing it to take part in discussions with Arab countries about economic plans, the Arabs will be encouraging it to pursue its present attitude and its obstruction of the peace efforts, he said. When a country like Egypt supports Damascus' stand and opposes the Doha meeting it gives credibility to Syria's ideas and logic, and further exposes Israel's hostile attitude towards peace, according to the writer. He said Jordan's support for the Doha meeting gives rise to a feeling of surprise, especially as it comes in the aftermath of an Israeli attempt to tamper with the Kingdom's security at the hands of Mossad agents in Amman. The writer called on Jordan to live up to its slogan of comprehensive peace and pan-Arab integration rather than supporting the Doha meeting and Israel's participation in its deliberations, benefiting from its resolutions.

AN EDITORIAL in Al Dusour daily discussed the plight of the Iraqi nation and the arrogance of the U.S. which, he said, adopts double-standard policies in its dealings with other nations. The paper said that in Washington's views, Iraq is the only country that violates U.N. Security Council resolutions and does not respond to the will of the world community. Washington seems to be obvious of the repeated violations of human rights and Security Council resolutions by the Jewish state and, in fact, provides protection of such actions and financial and material support to encourage it to pursue this policy, according to the paper. Only Britain, among all the council members, seems to be supporting the U.S. in this immoral scandal and inhuman act of imposing yet stricter penalties on the Iraqi people, the writer pointed out, adding that all that Washington does and all of its plans are directed towards one objective: serve Israel's interests by keeping the Arab countries weak and divided forever. "We condemn such policies and such attitudes and we reject any move to tighten the noose around the Iraqi nation and we salute those nations which express their objections to the American attitude," concluded the paper.

Washington Watch:

A dark mood

THE MOOD in the Arab World and among many in the Arab American community is bleak. There is confusion, alienation and, at times, anger. This is what I hear from my callers each week on my national call-in television programme broadcast on ANA-TV in the U.S. The same can be heard listening to callers on other satellite call-in programmes now broadcast throughout the Arab World or reading editorials in any Arab or Arab American newspaper. This mood is borne of a disturbing reality that is, itself, confusing.

Recent events defy logic: In Israel last week, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was still attempting to justify the attempted assassination of a Hamas leader in Jordan as part of Israel's "ongoing war against terror."

Netanyahu has been attacked on a variety of grounds in the U.S. and Israeli press: The attack shouldn't have taken place in Jordan, a "friendly" country; the attack was bungled; the timing of the attack was bad; it was wrong to have used Canadian passports; or in this politically sensitive time the attack was ill-advised. Nowhere have I seen the legality or morality of this terrorist operation called into question.

In fact, Israel has routinely used assassination and even "death squads" to eliminate Palestinians. Recently a press story appeared where an Israeli accused of murder based his defence on the argument that his mind had been affected by his training as a death squad assassin who participated in many "executions" in the West Bank.

Since none of the Palestinian victims of these assassination attempts, including Khaled Misha'al, had been tried and found guilty of any crime or received any "due process" before their execution was ordered, where, one might ask, is the "rule of law"? And bow, to a disbelieving Arab audience, does one explain the disparate treatment meted out to other countries that use assassi-

nation and terror to accomplish their objectives?

In this context it was confusing, at best, to note that Canada's ambassador to Israel, who was recalled to Ottawa in protest of Israel's use of fake Canadian passports, was quietly returned to his post last week. Israel simply promised not to use Canadian passports again.

Israel has now freed Sheikh Yassin and other Hamas activists. Presumably, dozens of others are soon to be released as part of a political accommodation resulting from the failed attack on Misha'al. Several questions now come to mind:

If the murder of Misha'al had succeeded, and the Mossad agents had escaped, would the Hamas leader and activists still have been freed?

Now that they have been freed, is the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) supposed to rearrest them and continue to arrest other Hamas activists in order to break the infrastructure of the group?

On what legal or political grounds can anyone expect the PNA to arrest and hold, with no "revolving door," those whom Israel has freed?

A short while ago Netanyahu announced 300 new settlements units at Efrat, and claimed that they are part of "natural expansion." "Where else," he asked, "are these people to go when their children marry?"

Last week Netanyahu ordered the demolition of two more Palestinian homes in the West Bank. The homes were being built adjacent to a Palestinian refugee camp and were intended for young men who were soon to marry. As they have done each time Palestinian homes have been destroyed, the Israelis once again sought to justify their action claiming that the targeted buildings had been built without permits. Since Palestinians cannot get permits to build, they are, presumably, not allowed "natural expansion." "Where," one might ask, "are those people to

go when their children marry?"

In the 1980s the U.S. Congress passed laws banning U.S. contact with the PLO and forbade the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) from operating within the U.S.

After the 1993 signing on the White House Lawn, instead of rescinding these anti-PLO laws, Congress passed the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act (MEPFA) which simply provided the administration with the right to waive the anti-PLO laws if they could certify that the PLO was living up to certain conditions stipulated by Congress.

This year Congress refused to new MEPFA. The PLO office in Washington is now closed and the PLO is once again forbidden to operate in the U.S.

Pro-Israel groups have been pressuring Congress and the administration to make sure that the old anti-PLO laws are once again enforced. As a result the PLO representative was not allowed to attend a recent meeting called by the U.S. to prepare for the Doha conference.

Meanwhile Arab states continue to be pressured to participate with Israel in the Doha summit. These surmises, it might be recalled, came about only because the PLO signed an agreement with Israel opening the door to Israel's involvement in multi-lateral efforts in the region. How does one justify this exclusion of the PLO in the U.S. while insisting on the inclusion of Israel in the Middle East?

This list of seemingly strange stories could be much longer. In the face of such a "reality" should there be any wonder why there is confusion, alienation and anger? When logic and rule of law are replaced by the arrogant use of power, confusion will reign. This is, of course, worrisome, because it is out of such an irrational environment that fanatic theories are created and irrational acts are justified.

By Dr. James J. Zogby

IT OCCURRED TO ME...

Fifi for Parliament

By Ali Kassay

I SHOULD start by apologising for my absence last week. This was due to a small surgical operation that I had to undergo to remove the gall bladder, an organ which, the physician assures me has been rendered obsolete by the evolution and progress of man.

My surgeon would have probably comforted me a good deal more by merely pointing out his impeccable track record and the absence of any discomfort after the operation. Where he went off track, perhaps, was in basing his assurance on the evolution and progress of man, a notion that one often finds hard to credit, particularly at the present moment, when one looks at the election campaigns of some candidates for parliament.

There appears to prevail in Jordan a one-stop-shop approach to electioneering, with candidates taking a stand on every issue imaginable, regardless of how much or how little they know about it, or are able to act upon this knowledge.

Candidates promise, should they be elected, to reform the bureaucracy, end the siege on Iraq, liberate Palestine and perhaps Andalusia, reverse environmental degradation, give women their full legitimate rights (one should be careful with this one since some rights may be inconvenient to men, and hence illegitimate), protect children, provide civil-service employment for all their tribesmen while ensuring equal opportunities for all, raise salaries while reducing government expenditure, and attract foreign investment while preserving Jordan's economic independence. It makes one wonder what they plan to do in the afternoon.

No, really. As you cruise through the streets of Amman, you see two types of election slogans on streamers across the streets. That is, the ones that are still in place, since the early rain and wind proved to be a blessing to more than the farmers of Jordan. The first type informs us of some basic facts, such as: "Democracy requires popular participation," "free and responsible women raise good children," or, how about "the sun rises from the east every day." Clearly candidates feel a great sense of achievement at having extracted these conclusions through the deep reflection.

The other type declares objectives without the slightest attempt by the candidates to explain the mechanisms by which these may be translated into action. What is even more surprising is that neither voters nor journalists seem in the least bit interested in enquiring about goals, mechanisms, time frames, or even in matching promises with past performance in the case of candidates running for a second or third term.

But my point concerns the realistic prospects of our deputies doing anything significant in course of a four-year term on all the issues over which they have pronounced a stand. Might it not have been more responsible on their part to have specialised in one or two issues and presented the voters with a realistic work plan?

There is a lot to be said for specialisation. For instance, Fifi Abdo, the great Egyptian dancer, specialised in belly dancing and she has made a brilliant career out of it. Would she have been as successful had she tried, like our deputies, to do everything under the sun?

Remember the Lavon affair?

By Pascal B. Karny

THE MISHA'AL affair that was triggered by the attempt on the life of Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman on Sept. 25 brings to mind the scandalous affairs of Lavon which took place in Cairo in 1954. But who is Lavon and what was the affair?

Lavon's real name is Pinhas Lubianker (1904-1976). Polish-born Lubianker was Zionist leader, who became Israel's defence minister in 1953. Lubianker was accused of complicity in an Israeli attempt in 1954 to discredit Egypt in the eyes of the U.S. and Britain by sabotaging U.S. and British installations in Cairo. The case became later known as the "Lavon Affair" and Lavon was forced to resign his post. However, Lavon was later exonerated by an investigating committee which revealed that the security operation mounted in Cairo by Israeli intelligence agents had been planned behind his back. The affair led ultimately to the resignation of Prime Minister David Ben Gurion in 1954.

Israeli successes in the wars with the Arab states may be attributed in large measure to the efficiency of its intelligence system but that efficiency has not been without scandals.

In 1954 some rapprochement was taking place between Egypt under the Nasser regime and the U.S. and Britain. To sabotage this rapprochement the head of the Israeli Mossad, Colonel Benjamin Givli, ordered his intelligence agents in Cairo to take action. Givli was a member of a powerful clique which often acted independently or in outright defiance of the Israeli government. On Givli's instructions Mossad agents in Egypt, were to plant bombs at American and British installations, including British-owned cinemas and Egyptian public buildings. It was hoped, as a consequence, that relation between these two Western powers and the Nasser government would deteriorate and that the

West would conclude that there was a strong internal opposition to the rapprochement between the two sides.

On July 2, 1954, Israeli intelligence agents bombed the Alexandria post office. On July 14, the agents bombed the U.S. Information Centre's libraries in Cairo and Alexandria. That same day a phosphorus bomb accidentally exploded in the pocket of Philip Natanson, almost burning him alive as he was about to enter the British-owned Rio Cinema in Alexandria. His arrest and subsequent confession led to the break-up of the spy net, but not before the achievement of another cycle of clandestine actions. On July 23, the anniversary of the 1952 Nasser revolution, Israeli agents still at large started fires in two Cairo cinemas, in the central post office and in the railway station.

The sabotage acts should not, however, be confused with the events that took place in 1951 in the last year of King Farouq's reign when mobs rampaged through downtown Cairo setting fire to foreign-owned hotels and shops in which scores of people died.

Some of the Israeli agents were caught and tried in Cairo. The trial established that the bombings had been carried out by an Israeli espionage and terrorist network. The latter was headed by Colonel Avraham Dar (alias John Darling) and a core of professionals. They had recruited several Egyptian Jews. One of them was a young woman named Marcelle Ninio who was an employee of a British company. Not all those involved in the sabotage were present at the trial as Colonel Dar and an Israeli colleague escaped and a third Israeli, Max Bennet, committed suicide.

All those present at the trial pleaded guilty, and most of them were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. But Musa Lieta Marzuk, a Tunisian-born citizen of France who was a surgeon at the Jewish Hospital in Cairo, and Samuel Azar, an engi-

neering professor from Alexandria, were sentenced to death and hanged.

The Lavon affair was the first and the most disastrous security adventure undertaken by Israel. It rocked the ruling establishment in Israel, split public opinion, forced new elections and contributed largely to Ben Gurion's eventual disappearance from public life.

Many other Israeli espionage and sabotage operations took place outside Israel even in very friendly countries such as the U.S. In 1984 a U.S. Navy official, Jonathan Pollard, was caught by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) banding over top secret documents to Israeli agents. He was tried and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987. Another well-known Israeli espionage affair was that of Ellice Cohen in Syria in 1966.

Ultimately discovered, Cohen was tried to death and hanged.

In many other cases Israeli intelligence agents were involved in assassinating persons living outside Israel and considered enemies of Israel. Two such victims were Hassan Salameh in Beirut and Khalil Al Wazir (alias Abu Jihad) in Tunis in 1988.

Notwithstanding the existing peace treaty of 1994 between Israel and Jordan, and in view of Israel's long history in previously untested espionage or assassination operations, one should not be surprised by the attempt of Israeli Mossad agents to assassinate Khaled Misha'al in Amman.

Amnesty International was right in stating: "The Israeli government's attempt to kill Hamas leader Khaled Misha'al in Amman on Sept. 25 follows a pattern of extrajudicial killings or attempted killings ordered or condoned by successive Israeli governments. Even if the person targeted is suspected of ordering or participating in violent acts, such killings are an unacceptable violation of human rights, including the right to life."

LETTERS

We're miles ahead in tourism

To the Editor:

I WOULD like to thank your anonymous reader for taking the time to share with us her/his unfortunately brief holiday at Marka Airport (Letter to the editor, Jordan Times, Oct. 21, 1997), a sorry alternative indeed when compared to the splendour of Luxor.

However, as the "reputable Jordanian travel agency" happens to be the company I work for, allow me to set the record straight:

1. The reason we offered first-row seats for the Thursday (Oct. 16) performance of Aida was that we could not get good seats for the next day, which were sold out already in July. We also opted for a Thursday departure as it is a convenient day for most working people in Amman. Allowing 3 1/2 hours from the time of arrival to Luxor until our guests had to leave their hotel for Hatshepsut Temple seemed quite acceptable; thus the same-day-flight-and-performance plan.

2. When faced with the news of the delay of the aircraft, we tried, and failed, again to get seats for the Friday performance. Though we were told that there was a chance of securing some seats on the "black market," we decided not to take that risk with our guests.

3. Mrs. M. Orfali, our tour manager, who was escorting the guests, apologised to them at Marka Airport, and advised them that they will be receiving a full refund.

4. On Saturday, Oct. 18, we contacted all our guests and informed them that their refund was ready and asked them for instructions on how they wished us to send them the monies. In fact, one of our guests was in Aqaba and suggested that he would have someone pass by on Monday to pick up the cheque. Another guest, who works at an embassy, was not available on Saturday, but a friend who was travelling along was informed. In short, I am not aware of a single guest who was not contacted by Saturday in order to a) apologise to, or b) arrange to refund the cost of the trip.

5. We would be delighted to pay interest on the money "lent" to us since September.

Your reader's attempt at drawing a parallel between the botched holiday and the allegedly low standards of tourist services provided by the private sector in this country is totally uncalled for. It is typical of the many "armchair entrepreneurs" who dissect our industry every opportunity they have. The following is not in defence of my company's reputation (our record of customer services for the last 50 years is there for anyone to examine), but cold hard facts about tourism in Jordan:

1. Compared to any of the neighbouring countries, the services that the various sectors of this industry offer to visitors is miles ahead. Ask those guests who have visited other countries in the region.

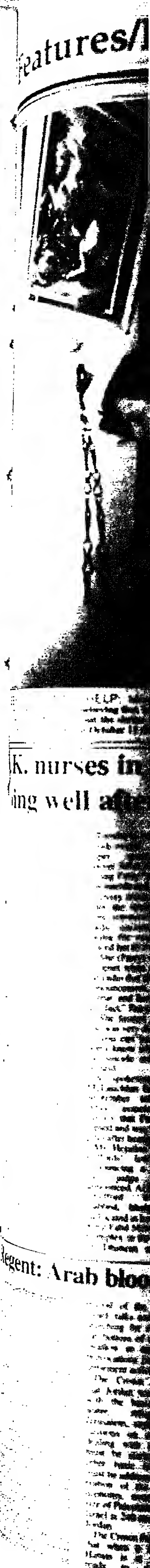
2. Show me another international airport where you can get from airside to your car, taxi or bus in 30 minutes. Has your reader been through JFK or Heathrow recently (and I am not talking rush hour)?

3. The intrinsic hospitality of the Jordanians is something so unique and so valuable in squaring the odds when it comes to the choice of destinations in the Middle East.

Nobody is perfect. However, everything is relative. Tourism in this country must be measured against similar destinations, those that compete directly with us.

Self-bashing (if I can coin the word) should be abolished. Tourism is an industry that has recently been catapulted into the limelight because of high hopes spawned by the peace process. Please give it a chance.

Munir Y Nassar,
International Traders,
Amman.



Peace prerequisite for achieving human, social and economic development — Regent

DETROIT (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan has emphasised that peace is an essential prerequisite for achieving human, social and economic development and reiterated Jordan's determination to pursue all possible efforts to overcome the present difficulties that obstruct the attainment of that goal.

In a televised address to the opening of the Jordan Business Week in Detroit, Michigan, Prince Hassan noted that Jordan has been striving to build a new Middle East that lives in peace not conflict, where cooperation rather than confrontation and understanding rather than misconceptions prevail.

Jordan Business Week, the Regent said, is viewed by Jordan as "a key step in creating bridges of understanding and human interaction between two like-minded nations, whose ultimate goal is the provision of a dignified, prosperous and secure life for their peoples."

"We believe that there are many opportunities for the enhancement of economic cooperation between the private sector in the Great State of Michigan, in all

parts of the United States and in Jordan," the Crown Prince said.

"The potential for joint ventures and investment opportunities is enormous," he said.

"The realisation of this potential has been made more possible by the economic reforms we have introduced, the conclusion of the Bilateral Investment Treaty between Jordan and the United States, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Michigan."

The opening session was attended by 1,200 personalities from the State of Michigan and members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Following is the text of the Crown Prince's address:

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to have this opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering at an extremely important juncture in our efforts to build peace and prosper economic development in our region. But allow me first to express my deep regrets for not being able to be here with you today, owing to pressing matters of state that necessitated my pres-

ence at home. I hope I will have the pleasure of meeting with you in the very near future.

The significance of holding the Jordan Business Week goes beyond the considerable boost we hope it will give to economic cooperation between Jordan and the United States. We view this event as a key step in creating bridges of understanding and human interaction between two like-minded nations, whose ultimate goal is the provision of a dignified, prosperous and secure life for their peoples.

We believe that there are many opportunities for the enhancement of economic cooperation between the private sector in the Great State of Michigan, in all parts of the United States and in Jordan. The potential for joint ventures and investment opportunities is enormous. The realisation of this potential has been made more possible by the economic reforms we have introduced, the conclusion of the Bilateral Investment Treaty between Jordan and the United States, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Michigan. These agreements give American

investors equal treatment to that given to their Jordanian counterparts. They also build on reforms that have rendered our market-oriented economy more compatible with the global economy.

More importantly, we have striven to ensure stability, peace and security, not just for our people, but for all countries and peoples of the Middle East. We believe that peace is an essential prerequisite for achieving human, social and economic development. We have thus saved no effort in doing all that we could to build a new Middle East marked by peace rather than conflict, cooperation rather than confrontation and understanding rather than misconceptions.

We note with sadness the trials and tribulations through which the peace process has been going. Such setbacks essentially result from lack of commitment to agreements signed and the breakdown of confidence among the negotiating parties. But these difficulties will not deter us from pursuing our noble goal. On the contrary, they will make us work even harder to advance the peace

process and help all parties to the negotiations move forward towards the achievement of a comprehensive peace that fulfills the legitimate rights of all. In partnership with the United States and other concerned parties, we are committed to bringing about peace and security to this important part of the world. The peoples of the Middle East have suffered more than enough from conflicts and wars. They deserve peace. We must not, will not, waver in our determination to help them attain these basic human rights.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Honorable John Engler, the Governor of Michigan, and the people of this great State for hosting this event, which we consider another substantial step towards forging mutually beneficial cooperation. And I look forward to receiving as many of you as possible at the American Expo, which we will have the pleasure of hosting in Amman in June next year. I thank you all and wish you success.

SEEKING SAINT'S HELP: Mervat Stephanos chains herself at Saint George's shrine in Cairo believing that he will intercede for her wishes. Scores of Christians and Muslims visit the shrine daily to seek the saint's help with their problems. Picture taken on October 11 (Reuters photo)

U.K. nurses in Saudi Arabia doing well after family visit

DHAHRAN (R) — Two British nurses accused of murder in Saudi Arabia are in good health and prison visits from relatives have lifted their spirits, the British consul-general in Riyadh said Tuesday.

William Patey, who said consular officials had repeatedly seen Deborah Parry and Lucille McLauchlan, dismissed reported comments by a top defence lawyer that Parry had tried to commit suicide after reports last month she had been sentenced to death for the murder of Australian colleague Yvonne Gilford.

"We've seen them a few times since (the verdict report), including yesterday," Patey told Reuters. "Consul Simon Lovett saw them. They both were in reasonably good form. They had their families there so that obviously cheers them up."

Gilford family lawyers said in September that Parry, 38, had been sentenced to death for the murder, but the nurses' lawyers and the British government deny a verdict was issued for Parry. McLauchlan, 31, was found guilty of being an accomplice to Gilford's murder and faces eight years in jail and 500 lashes.

Tuesday's edition of the Saudi-owned Al Hayat paper quoted defence lawyer Salah Al Hejailan as saying Parry "tried to commit suicide and stayed in the recovery room for a while" after the international law firm, representing the Gilfords, announced to the media the court had sentenced her to death.

"She (Parry) was obviously upset when she heard on the radio that they made that announcement, which was untrue and has no basis in any fact," Patey said.

"She fainted at that news and was very distressed by it as you can imagine. But I don't know where they get the suicide attempt from," he said.

A spokesman for the McLauchlan family had in September told Britain's press association news agency that Parry had collapsed and was taken to hospital after hearing the report. Mr Hejailan attacked the Gilfords' law firm for announcing a verdict that the judge had not announced, Al Hayat said.

Gilford was found stabbed, bludgeoned and suffocated in her room at the King Fahd Military Medical Complex in the eastern city of Dhahran a few days

ahead of her 56th birthday in December. The two women were arrested a few days later.

McLauchlan's Parents Stan and Ann McLauchlan and Parry's sister and brother-in-law Sandra and Jonathan Ashbee visited the two women in jail Saturday, Sunday and Monday on one of their many trips to Saudi Arabia. The nurses are being held at a women's prison in Dammam, eastern Saudi Arabia.

The families left last night. The Saudi ambassador to Britain, Ghazi Algossabi, said last week Parry faced a moderate jail sentence rather than execution if she is found guilty since the victim's brother has waived his right to seek the death penalty.

Saudi Arabia applies strict Islamic law including beheading by the sword for convicted murderers, drug smugglers and rapists. But in murder cases the victim's family has the right to accept financial compensation and prevent an execution.

The envoy said Frank Gilford's decision to spare Parry would allow the court to review the judgement already passed on McLauchlan.

Yemeni farmer killed as police break up protest

SANAA (AFP) — A Yemeni farmer was killed and another injured on Tuesday during clashes that erupted when police tried to break up a protest against a 60 per cent hike in the price of diesel fuel, police said.

"A farmer was killed and another injured in clashes between the security forces and farmers" who on Monday had blocked roads linking the capital Sanaa with eight regional towns, a police source told Agence France Presse (AFP).

The police source said all the roads to Yemen's rural towns had now been opened. He added: "All attempts to convince the farmer failed and the police had no choice but to use force."

A Yemeni tribal leader

meanwhile told AFP that the road between Sanaa and the southern town of Maareb was blocked Tuesday for the third day running.

The cabinet decided during a special session Saturday to raise the price of diesel by 60 per cent, from six riyals (five cents) to 10 riyals (eight cents) per litre.

The decision caused hundreds of farmers, many armed, to take to the streets of both Sanaa and Maareb.

A parliamentary source told AFP Tuesday that the government "has no intention of backing down on its decision."

The Yemeni government increased the price of gas by 25 per cent in July. It also has raised water and electricity rates as part of an economic restructuring programme.

Kuwaiti MP claims attackers involved in financial scam

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Kuwaiti MP Abdullah Nabbar, injured in an assassination attempt, claimed Tuesday that his attackers were involved in a financial scam which was exposed by a parliamentary panel he chaired.

The liberal MP said a panel charged with protecting public funds, which he headed during the last parliament, exposed a company charging highly inflated prices for supplying the army with food over three or four years.

Mr Nabbar said Gulf Foodstuff Company was paid 11 million dinars (\$36 million) per year for its services, but when the contract was opened to competition by the defence

ministry in 1996 the cost for the same service was found to be four million dinars (\$13 million).

"I believe that some of the owners (of the company) and beneficiaries are the criminals," Mr Nabbar said, referring to the attackers who opened fire on him on June 6 when he was driving back to Kuwait City from his beach house.

"As a result, the company, among them the criminals and maybe others, benefited from amounts above the real price reaching perhaps 20 million or 30 million dinars (\$66 million or \$99 million) during three or four years," he told reporters.

Council of Islamic Organisations criticises Egyptian ambassador to Israel for 'reflecting bad image'

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Council of Islamic Organisations in Jordan criticised Egyptian Ambassador to Israel, Mohammad Bassiouni for what it said "reflecting a bad image of Arabs and Muslims."

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the council said that Ambassador Bassiouni, who was reported to have tried to rape an Israeli bellydancer, should have acted more responsibly, saying "his deeds should reflect the country that he represents."

"We have noticed for years that his political statements on Israeli television reflect weakness and petty attitude," the statement said.

"Egypt is the second home for all Arabs and Muslims. It is possible that its representative deals with a naked bellydancer and his photos are shown all over the world while Israeli police investigates a rape charge against him?" said the statement.

Envoy Bassiouni, who

has been ambassador to Israel since 1986, considered returning home after the bellydancer scandal but later changed his mind after he was assured that no charges would be brought against him.

Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1979, but relations between the two countries have deteriorated rapidly since the election of right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in May of 1996.

Israel arrests woman linked to Islamists

(Continued from page 1)

Jerusalem. Ms. Ayyan, 35, was arrested in 1987 for planning to explode a car bomb outside the offices of then Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Her eight-year sentence was later increased to 25 years after she stabbed a fellow prisoner.

She was released in February along with 29 other Palestinian women prisoners in a deal reached between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian National Authority.

Their release was part of a general release of Palestinian prisoners which was

agreed upon in self-rule accords but which Israel has not fully implemented. The Israeli army has arrested hundreds of Palestinians suspected of belonging to Jihad or the larger group, the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), has conducted two suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and September.

U.S. envoy ends another Mideast mission without concrete results

(Continued from page 1)

The committees were relaunched by Mr. Ross three weeks ago after being suspended since March, but Palestinians have complained that Israel was stalling progress for political reasons behind the guise of alleged security concerns.

Aside from the airport, the committees deal with the creation of a route across Israel for Palestinians to move between the West Bank and Gaza, the opening of a port in Gaza and the freeing of Palestinian prisoners.

Faced with the wide gaps between the two sides over larger issues which have

impeded full resumption of the peace process, particularly Palestinian demands for a halt in Jewish settlement construction, Mr. Ross had pushed this week for progress on the interim issues.

A breakthrough here would have given a boost to U.S. mediation efforts ahead of a meeting between top Israeli and Palestinian officials with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington Oct. 27.

Those talks are due to tackle the tougher issues, including Palestinian demands for a halt to settlement building and implementation of suspended Israeli troop withdrawals

from the West Bank, to allow the launching of accelerated negotiations on a final peace settlement.

But despite an impressive array of security and military chiefs at the Arafat-Mordechai talks, no progress on any of the interim issues were announced.

The heads of Palestinian security, Jibril Rajoub, Mohammad Dahlan and Amin Hindi, along with Israel's chief of staff Amnon Shahak and domestic and army intelligence chiefs Ami Ayalon and Moshe Yaalon split off from Messrs Arafat, Mordechai and Ross to hold their own talks during the meeting.

Israeli troops beat Arab unconscious

(Continued from page 1)

observer, a member of the temporary international presence in Hebron, deployed in the town.

Mr. Abu Sineia showed reporters marks and scratches on his stomach and back.

Around 30 Jewish settlers scuffled with journalists. A Reuters cameraman said the settlers attacked him and other journalists and damaged his camera. He said police detained two settlers.

Hebron, home to 100,000 Palestinians and 400 Jewish

settlers, is a frequent flash-point for Arab-Israeli violence.

Israeli troops withdrew from most of the town in January under an agreement with the Palestinian National Authority but are still deployed around Jewish settlements.

Regent: Arab blood is as dear to us as Jewish blood to Israel

(Continued from page 1)

peace table which we have already attended.

"We have signed a peace treaty and we say to those critics... that it is better to light a candle than to curse the dark. Let's use the peace treaty to make our views forcefully and clearly to the other side," Prince Hassan said.

"The good news," said the Crown Prince, "is that Jordanian [prisoners in Israel] have been released, that our respect for human life, for Jordanian life and our firm stance on this issue have been recognised and respected by, not least of all, the Jordanian family."

Prince Hassan noted that the assassination attempt happened at the eve of the

revival of the Palestinian-Israeli talks and "as we are searching for everything at the bottom of the barrel to swallow so many difficult provocations [such as] new settlement activities."

The Crown Prince said that Jordan was concerned with the basic issues of water, refugees and Jerusalem, saying that discussions on concepts for dealing with these issues must be started. He said other basic issues which must be addressed is the liberation of the Palestinian economy, noting that the size of Palestinian trade with Israel is 340 times that with Jordan.

The Crown Prince stressed that when it is said that Hamas is at some point ready to discuss the

prospects for peace on the basis of its position that there must be withdrawal and changes of the realities on the ground, then there is an inkling that the possibilities for dialogue are there.

Prince Hassan noted that David Ben Gurion presided over so many different militias at the time of the creation of the Jewish state and these militias were brought together within the Israeli army and that Palestinian National Authority (PNA) President Yasser Arafat had tried in the past to bring all Palestinian factions together.

"I think that any security concept for this region should be inclusive of all," said Prince Hassan, stressing that people who are acutely wedded to extreme actions are different from those who

are chronically terror oriented and are people who are suffering from the economics and politics of despair.

Asked why His Majesty King Hussein did not receive Mr. Netanyahu when he last came to Jordan, Prince Hassan, who stressed the anger with which the Kingdom reacted to attack on Mr. Misha'al, said that the "chemistry of the relationship at the time was extremely difficult" and at the time "when we were talking about the possibility of policy changes to include a broad based discussion with all Palestinians," the assassination attempt took place.

In response to a question about the purpose of his recent visit to the United States, Prince Hassan said

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Cairo Amman Bank receives authorisation to raise capital to JD20m

**** THE GENERAL** assembly of the Cairo Amman Bank has approved, at an extraordinary meeting, increasing the bank's capital from JD10 million to JD20 million. The increase will be carried out through offering JD5 million worth of shares at par value to present shareholders in a private subscription.

The remaining JD5 million will come from capitalising JD5 million of reserves and retained earnings and, consequently, distributing half a share free bonus for every share of capital owned by the shareholders.

Board Chairman Khalil Talhouni told the general assembly that the bank eyes bringing up the capital to JD30 million at a later stage on the strength of shareholders' equity rising to JD30 million by the end of this year and to between JD40 million and JD50 million at the later stage.

Mr. Talhouni expected the bank to post a pre-tax profit between JD10 million and JD12 million this year and said that the bank's management is thinking of branching outside Jordan and Palestine and marketing new products. He boasted that the bank ranked the first in the Palestinian territories in terms of deposits in Jordanian dinars and for holding around 25 per cent of total Palestine deposits.

General Manager Yazid Mufit estimated the bank's total assets at the end of June at more than \$1,000 million and said efforts were being intensified to cut costs and boost efficiency and productivity (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq + Al Dustour).

Non-Jordanian investments account for 6% of total investments during 9 months

**** ACCORDING TO** the latest statistics issued by the Directorate of Companies Control, there are 376 non-Jordanian investors registered at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply. The total investments of non-Jordanians during the first nine months of this year amounted to JD10.46 million. The figure represented six per cent of the total investments which amounted to JD174.9 million during the period covered.

During the past month, only two non-Jordanian operating companies and four non-operating companies were registered. During September 1996, only three companies were registered as non-operating non-Jordanian firms (Al Ra'i).

Anani to head delegation to the MENA conference

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jawad Anani, deputy prime minister for development affairs, will head the Jordanian delegation to the controversial Middle East and North Africa (MENA) conference, scheduled to be held in Qatar next month, a government spokesman announced Tuesday.

Acting Minister of State for Information Affairs Nasser Lawzi said the Jordanian delegation will discuss joint ventures with participants, including Israelis, during the three-day meeting.

The minister, who was speaking following the bi-weekly Cabinet session, said ministers of industry, trade and supply, planning, water and irrigation and representatives of the private sector will accompany Dr. Anani.

Mr. Lawzi said Jordan will submit several projects in the fields of transportation, energy, communications and water to the conference in addition to the phosphate, potash, fertilisers and cement industries.

The minister said the Jordanian delegation will discuss "regional projects" with participating countries.

Mr. Lawzi said Jordan's decision to take part in the conference and the level of its representation was not discussed with any Arab country at any stage prior to this time.

Several Arab states have objected to Israeli participation in the conference and called for boycotting the meeting because of the Israeli presence.

Those states urged the Qatari government to cancel or at least postpone the meeting until a progress is achieved in the stalled peace process.

The MENA conference in Qatar is the fourth in a series of similar meetings that are part of the multilateral talks between Israel and its Arab neighbours.

The first meeting was held in Casablanca in 1994 and was followed by another one in Amman in 1995 and in Cairo in 1996.

Meanwhile, representatives of private sector said that they have not received any invitation to attend the meeting as part of the Jordanian delegation.

Fakhri Bilbeisi, a member of the Jordan Businessmen Association (JBA) said that no invitation was extended to the JBA.

"What we know for sure is that selected people representing the private sector will attend but as far as the JBA is concerned, nothing has been received yet," Mr. Bilbeisi told the Jordan Times.

Walid Khathib, general manager of the Amman Chamber of Industry (ACI), confirmed Mr. Bilbeisi's accounts and said that a proposed meeting scheduled to be held to discuss this issue was postponed for no specific reason.

Mr. Khathib said the meeting, organised by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply, was expected to discuss the private sector's participation in the MENA conference.

Jordanian businessmen opposed to Doha conference

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan's business lobbies said Tuesday they disapproved of next month's major regional economic conference in Doha while Israel flouted its peace pledges but would not stop individual members from attending.

They said the timing of the conference in Qatar was not appropriate, and although they would send a formal delegation they were actively discouraging private sector participation.

"So it's left for every member to take his position on an individual basis," said Wasef Azar, vice chairman of the Amman Chamber of Industry, grouping 9,000 members who are the backbone of industry.

"The timing of the conference is not appropriate because Israel continues to place obstacles on the export of Jordanian goods to the Palestinian market," said Riad Saifi, a vice chairman of the Amman Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Saifi said the 12-member board of the powerful business lobby which groups more than 30,000 trading firms had yet to decide whether to participate or not.

Many businessmen see the fourth Middle East and North Africa summit as helping Israel to integrate economically in the Arab World prematurely, before it has delivered on its Middle East peace pledges.

Mr. Azar avoided criticising the government, which approved Tuesday sending a high-level delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs

Jawad Anani, and leading ministers including the Central Bank governor.

"The government is in an embarrassing position and has a desire to attend, which means we cannot let our government alone in the field," Mr. Azar told Reuters.

Jordan's foreign minister has described the conference as a "golden opportunity" to present to international investors many of the business projects for which the country seeks foreign capital.

"Jordan will present its projects and capabilities and will hold meetings to encourage their implementation," said government spokesman Nasser Al Lawzi after a cabinet meeting Tuesday.

For the second year in a row the Jordanian private sector is not presenting its own projects to the conference but the government has submitted its own wish list which includes investment needs of large private enterprises.

They include multi-billion-dollar projects in energy such as a \$500 million project to expand and revamp its oil refinery, a \$3 billion Aqaba free trade zone, tourism infrastructure projects and a proposed \$150 million exhibition centre.

Similar projects which Jordan took to the last three Middle East meetings have struggled to raise investor interest.

Echoing the views of many businessmen, Mr. Azar said that it would have been better if Jordan had taken a "tougher stance" by not attending, to show its displeasure at Israeli practices.

"The mere presence of

Israel in the midst of the gathering may appear as though we are insensitive to our humiliation and its violation of our sovereignty," Mr. Azar said.

Israel's relations with Jordan, its closest peace partner since the two countries signed a peace treaty in 1994, have soured recently and plummeted new depths last month when Israeli agents tried to kill an Islamist leader in Amman last month.

Businessmen say Israel continues to put obstacles in the way of business ties with Jordan's natural market in the West Bank.

Many Jordanian businessmen are disappointed with lack of tangible benefits from peace and say the climate for making business ventures with Israeli firms is still not ripe.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar		1.7884	0.6120	1.4883	120.80	1.3882	1744.00	2.0148	5.9920
DE Mark	0.5582		0.3420	0.8326	67.44	0.7758	974.36	1.1208	3.2598
GB Sterling	1.6339	2.9250		2.4288	197.12	2.2882	2848.52	3.2917	9.7903
CH Franc	0.6719	120.05	0.4107		80.96	0.8319	1110.28	135.36	4.2226
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4823	0.5072	1.2343		1.1506	14.45	166.99	4.9688
CA Dollar	0.7204	1.2876	0.4408	1.0737	1.15		1255.89	1.4510	4.3183
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0250	0.3506	0.0853	1448.02	0.7955		11.54	3.4338
FR Guider	0.4964	98.72	0.3036	73.39	58.81	0.6887	864.75		2.8728
FR Franc	0.1669	0.2983	0.1021	24.8390	20.10	0.2315	33.60	33.6000	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	Unit	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar		0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6402	0.3042	3.6728	1536.25	3.5900
Jordan Dinar	1.4124		5.2973	0.5325	5.1415	0.4286	5.1876	2168.84	4.7881
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888		0.1005	0.97	0.0811	0.96	409.61	0.9039
Bahraini Dinar	2.65	1.8790	9.9485		9.66	0.8069	9.74	4075.04	8.9921
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0303	1.0303		0.0836	1.01	422.02	0.9313
Kuwait Dinar	3.2875	2.3276	12.3209	12.3209	11.97		12.07	5050.46	8.8313
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0212	0.9911	0.0828		418.28	0.9230
Libanese/1000	0.65	0.4609	2.4413	2.4413	2.3685	0.1886	2.3908		2.2086
Egyptian	0.2950	0.2089	1.1064	0.1112	1.0738	0.0897	1.0834	453.18	

Mid-East Currencies									
Currency	Unit	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	ITL	FRF	ESP
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4770	0.16319	0.39717	3.21668				
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.48708	0.16684	0.40588	3.28472				
KW Dinar	3.2875	5.88235	2.01207	4.89718	398.688				
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.74808	1.62338	3.95101	320				
CY Pound	1.8977	3.3944	1.1612	2.828	228.856				

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Unit	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	ITL	FRF	ESP
USD	5.53	5.68	5.78	5.88	5.97				
GBP	7.18	7.31	7.38	7.45	7.51				
JPY	0.40	0.39	0.43	0.47	0.47				
DEM	3.49	3.71	3.82	3.96	4.20				
FRF	3.50	3.67	3.80	3.96	4.18				
CHF	1.69	1.85	1.94	1.99	2.21				
ITL	6.71	6.47	6.16	5.88	5.72				

JOD Cross Rates									
Currency	Unit	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	USD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar	0.708	0.710							
GB Sterling	1.1547	1.3805							
DE Mark	0.3984	0.4004							
CH Franc	0.4799	0.4823							
FR Franc	0.1189	0.1185							
JP Yen	0.5845	0.5874							
NL Guider	0.3536	0.3554							
IT Lira	0.4079	0.4088							

Main Equity Indices									
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change	Index
New York	DOW JONES	8022.13	100.69	1.27	8024.34	7921.93	7921.44		
New York	S&P 500	367.42	11.21	1.24	367.18	355.91	355.61		
London	FT-SE 100	5225.9	14.3	0.28	5227.5	5211	5211		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	17210.09	84.42	0.49	17210.58	17209.8	17209.8		
Paris	CAC 40	2989.89	43.18	1.47	2992.42	2949.98	2949.71		
Frankfurt	DAX	4139.2	46.28	2.44	4139.3	4083.97	4083.97		

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET										
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SIKKISANI										
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179										
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 21/10/1997										
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	NO. OF TRANS.	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE
346.000	243.000	ARAB BANK	15.3	1.20	14	740	245550	331.00	332.00	1.00+
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	9	0.00	23	12845	23451	1.84	1.82	-.02-
2.600	2.150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	9.9	6.33	17	5845	14671	2.54	2.50	-.04-
5.100	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	14.9	3.00	3	825	4307	4.98	4.98	-
4.280	2.440	JOR. KUWAIT BANK	11.1	0.00	5	658	2023	3.07	3.12	+.05+
1.050	740	JOR. CULP BANK	4.5	9.21	3	7000	5320	7.76	7.76	-
4.950	3.510	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	14.1	3.47	4	23670	81737	3.51	3.46	-.05-
3.900	3.080	JOR. INV. & TRD. BANK	24.7	0.00	1	1500	5775	3.85	3.85	-
1.950	890	BEIT AL-KAL (BEITRA)	6	15.96	5	1150	1071	9.2	9.4	+.02+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 237.49	%CHG: +0.16		112	54278	383857			
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.51	%CHG: 0.00		1	47	258			
2.050	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.0	5.35	30	28912	54052	1.87	1.87	-
3.100	2.450	TRIDY ELECTRICITY	21.8	3.14	7	950	3539	3.80	3.66	-.14-
7.500	6.000	VEHCLS. OWNERS FED.	7.7	5.00	1	200	1400	7.00	7.00	+.15+
3.830	2.890	JAR. INTEL. INV. EDUC.	10.1	0.00	3	400	1536	3.80	3.87	+.07+
1.140	900	FAKRA EDUCATION	8	0.00	2	450	414	9.2	9.2	-
2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	8.4	6.21	1	500	985	1.76	1.77	+.01+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 111.97	%CHG: +0.44		45	31512	62155			
4.450	3.030	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	21.9	3.37	69	21825	70206	3.15	3.26	+.11+
11.160	9.070	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	10.7	8.05	19	2588	28607	11.11	11.04	-.07-
3.260	1.410	INDUSTRIAL COM. AG.	9	0.00	11	2000	2751	1.41	1.36	-.05-
4.700	3.040	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.9	4.62	22	7979	34765	4.33	4.33	-
7.250	5.000	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.9	4.21	22	1900	9025	5.00	4.75	-.25-
1.480	1.050	BAFTA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	12	2850	3620	1.25	1.27	+.02+
6.000	4.300	DAR ALDAMA DV. INV.	13.9	4.42	3	650	3679	5.70	5.66	-.04-
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.9	10.00	4	885	2209	2.50	2.50	-
710	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.4	0.00	11	6900	3414	30	49	+.01+
770	510	NATIONAL INDS.	9	0.00	9	7170	5776	1.31	1.12	-.17-
1.200	510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	8	3000	1620	54	54	-
920	530	JOR. ROCKWOOL INDS.	9	0.00	1	500	325	67	66	-.02-
890	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	5	3550	2346	68	66	-.02-
1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	16.9	5.30	4	1000	1230	1.31	1.32	+.01+
1.680	1.080	UNIV. MOD. INDS.	12	2.21	11	8100	10044	1.24	1.24	-
1.460	890	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	15.0	11.24	5	1250	1113	89	89	-
1.070	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.8	0.00	24	19067	16340	8.87	8.66	-.01-
1.330	1.080	INTEL. TOBACCO	6.5	0.00	9	7046	8370	1.18	1.18	+.01+
1.200	860	UNION CH. & VEG.	50.9	0.00	1	50	56	1.13	1.12	-.01-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 115.80	%CHG: +0.44		231	108315	209636			
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 171.00	%CHG: +0.27		389	194152	655906			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 21/10/1997										
610	380	JOR. TRADW PAC.	10.4	0.00	13	22750	8973	39	39	-
800	660	UNION INV. SOF.	9	0.00	4	789	204	76	76	-
570	360	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	4	10000	4000	40	40	-
950	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	69.1	0.00	4	81	85	73	73	-.01-
950	610	AL-DAMLATIES 75%	69.1	0.00	1	1000	470	73	72	-.01-
1.130	850	UNIFIED FOR FIBER INV.	59.9	0.00	1000	1150	1.13	1.15	1.01	+.02+
840	380	ARAB INTEL. INV. TRD.	44.9	0.00	1	2250	76	39	39	-
650	370	NATL. TEXTILE	9	0.00	5	900	333	37	37	-
750	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. NAWICO	6	0.00	6	5550	2225	41	41	-
640	410	AL-KHAWAZI & MOULDS	9	0.00	2	88	36	43	41	-.02-
810	710	AL-KHAWAZI STEEL	13.4	0.00	14	1676	76	34	34	-
660	580	MIDWEST PHARM. 75%	7	0.00	15	11900	4641	64	64	-
730	550	RAT. PHARM. 85%	9	0.00	2	1200	1070	66	65	-.01-
470	280	INDUS. ENG.	1	0.00	1	310	31	69	69	-
N 1.000	690	NAT. ALUMINIUM. 75%	96.0	0.00	2	2350	1474	69	69	-
N 1.020	720	JAR. INT. FOOD FACT.	37.6	0.00	1	500	390	81	78	-.03-
840	580	HIO. EAST COMPLEX	7.4	16.67	13	34700	20830	61	60	-.01-
GRAND TOTAL					84	100323	48801			



Chinese Olympic weightlifting champion Zhan Xugang competes in the men's 70 kilogramme class, setting two world records at China's Eighth National Games in Shanghai. Zhan snatched 160kg and jerked 200kg for a combined weight of 360kg, beating his own record set at the Atlanta Olympic Games in July 1996 (Reuters photo)

United's shares a success story

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United were on Tuesday held up as a shining example of how to succeed in the modern business era after becoming the only one of 18 football clubs on the stock market to improve their share price since April.

While the majority of clubs floated have suffered a significant drop in value, United have increased from 644p to 667.5p since the start of the financial year - an indication of their consistent success both on and off the pitch.

"There is no doubt they are the biggest and the best run and that is reflected in their share price," revealed top city analyst William Davies of Stockbrokers Albert E. Sharp today.

"They are head and shoulders above all the other clubs in terms of their size and their supporter base and how much they are prepared to invest in their products."

"If somebody came to us and asked us which football club to invest in, they really are the only one which represents good value and a virtually guaranteed return."

Davies predicts the inception of pay-per-view television will strengthen United's value and cites Italy as a perfect example of how the market could develop.

"In Italy they already have pay-per-view and just about all of the revenue goes to Inter Milan and I am sure if it was introduced here, United would claim most of the market," stressed Davies.

"If you do not fill your ground then pay-per-view is not going to add much to your revenue and there are still quite a few clubs who are in that situation."

"I can see clubs like United, Newcastle, Arsenal and Liverpool benefiting because they consistently fill grounds but other clubs may not profit to the same extent."

Davies added: "All the other clubs have dropped in price because share prices got rounded up a bit too much at the beginning of the year and there is also less interest in the stock market during the summer. "The expectations of the revenue coming in and pay-per-view were too high and now you are seeing a levelling out."

British MPs warn of possible Olympic boycott over Aborigines

CANBERRA (AFP) — British MPs have warned of a possible boycott of the Sydney 2000 Olympics unless the Australian government changes key legislation on land title for Aborigines, one of the parliamentarians said Tuesday.

In a letter to Prime Minister John Howard, the British parliamentary human rights group suggested the government's approach to the legislation was placing Australia's reputation at risk, said MP Jeremy Corben.

He told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation he hoped to convey his concerns to Howard at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh this week.

Aborigines in Australia suffered high levels of unemployment and infant mortality, lower life expectancy and much poorer living standards than the rest of the population, Corben said.

He said the new legislation could remove their existing rights to negotiate native title for a huge amount of land.

"It seems to me that this is a rolling back of what was a

very progressive piece of legislation in 1993 and is certainly at variance with all the trends in the U.N. and elsewhere concerning the rights of indigenous people," he said.

The MPs were concerned about human rights of Aboriginal people and had written a "fairly firm letter", he said, which referred to the possibility of a boycott of the Sydney 2000 Games.

The native title legislation is to be considered by parliament before the end of the year.

Leader of Australia's opposition Labour Party, Kim Beazley, said he shared the British MPs' concern about the legislation but spoke out against threats to the games.

"It is a terrific thing for Australia. It is going to be a wonderful opportunity to showcase what is a great nation and I urge anybody who has a grievance with what the government does, not to threaten the Olympic Games," Beazley said.

Ma's Army back on world-record-breaking form

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Dong Yanmei, a 17-year-old protégé of Ma Junren, smashed the women's world 5,000m record at the Chinese National Games in another slice of athletics history for the supercoach.

Dong and two other runners beat the old record of 14min 36.45sec set by Fernanda Ribeiro of Portugal in Belgium on July 22, 1995.

The teenager set a new world best time of 14:31.27 in the 5,000m heats. Another member of "Ma's Family Army," Jiang Bo, was second in 14:31.30. Liu Shixiang of Shandong province came in third in 14:32.33.

The packed Shanghai stadium erupted as the new athletic stars sealed a stunning comeback by the 52-year-old coach, who first hit the headlines with the record-breaking feats of his earlier generation of runners four years ago.

In 1993, Wang Junxia, Qu Yunxia and Liu Dong came from nowhere to

dominate the middle and long distance events at the Stuttgart world championships. Ma set the world alight with his claims that he gave runners a daily concoction which included blood from a freshly killed turtle.

At the National Games in Beijing months later, Wang was one of two Chinese women to beat the 10,000m record. Qu beat the 1,500m record, which Wang also bettered. More spectacularly, Wang beat the 3,000m world record twice in 24 hours.

Wang and Liu Dong split from Ma in a dispute over prize money from the 1993 world championships and his dictatorial training regime.

Ma has also been recovering from serious illness and a car crash. But he has proven doubters wrong.

This week, the coach has been directing his runners from the stands of the Shanghai track, surrounded by Chinese reporters watching his every

move. Ma has already warned he is preparing his stable of runners for an onslaught on the next Olympics.

"I am setting my sights on the 2000 Olympics and I'm confident that my girls will be good enough to create miracles in Sydney," he said.

Ma's new runners, who say they consider Wang a "traitor" for leaving the "Army", have already made their presence felt at the Games.

Dong timed 30:38.09 in the 10,000m on Sunday and was for a long time on course for the world record of 29:31.78.

On Saturday, Jiang Bo, who is 20, came within 0.52sec of the women's 1,500m world record set by Qu in Beijing four years ago. She clocked 3min 50.98sec, making a burst four laps from the end after seeing a sign from Ma.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Saints lose Ostenstad until Christmas

LONDON (AFP) — Southampton striker Egil Ostenstad has flown home to Norway to undergo surgery on an ankle injury which will keep him out of action until Christmas. Ostenstad, 25, has been plagued by the problem after damaging his ankle on a pre-season tour to Germany and has been restricted to just six appearances in the Premiership this season. Manager Dave Jones said: "Losing Egil is a big blow. We thought he was finally over the trouble last week when he looked to have returned to full fitness. But the injury has flared up again and we have now been advised that the only way for him to cure it is to have the operation."

1,000 queue for leftover Olympic tickets

TOKYO (AFP) — More than 1,000 people, some of whom queued all night with sleeping bags, lined up in Nagano on Tuesday to buy spare tickets for next February's Winter Olympics. Of the 1.28 million tickets for the Games, 325,000 have been returned from lots reserved for sponsors. Some customers also cancelled orders or failed to pay. Many people, eager to get tickets for the biggest Winter Olympics in history, slept at Nagano railway station near the main ticket office.

Persson's heading home

MILAN (AFP) — Atalanta midfielder Joakim Persson is set to return to his native Sweden with IFK Gothenburg after an unhappy spell in Italian football. The 22-year-old, who joined Atalanta from Malmö, has failed to win a first team place

since arriving in the summer of 1996 and hasn't made an appearance all season. Persson, who is about to sign a three-year contract with Gothenburg, said: "I have to go where I have a chance of playing."

Davenport up to 4th in rankings

MIAMI (AFP) — American Lindsay Davenport, a tournament winner in Zurich on Sunday, was rewarded Monday when she rose two places in the new WTA Tour rankings. Davenport improved from sixth to fourth in the rankings, behind Martina Hingis, Jana Novotna and Monica Seles. Nathalie Tauziat of France, beaten by Davenport in the Zurich final, improved three places to 19th in the new rankings.

Standard Liege coach sacked

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Standard Liege, who dropped to 12th in the Belgian league after losing 3-0 to 10-man Brugge last Friday, have sacked their Dutch coach Aad de Mos. De Mos joined Standard at the beginning of the season after just six months at German side Werder Bremen. He had previously coached Dutch clubs Ajax Amsterdam and PSV Eindhoven and Belgian sides Mechelen and Anderlecht. His assistant Daniel Boccia takes over as caretaker coach.

Jonk hopes for a repeat against Newcastle

PARIS (AFP) — PSV Eindhoven's Dutch international midfielder Wim Jonk will be hoping that Newcastle United's Irish goalkeeper Shay Given is as generous as his compatriot Packy Bonner was three years ago when the sides met in Wednesday's Group C European Champions League meeting.

Jonk saw his speculative 30-yard shot turned into his own net by Bonner as the Dutch eliminated the Irish 2-0 in the last 16 of the 1994 World Cup.

Given, who signed from Blackburn Rovers during the summer, will be hoping that his defence holds up rather better than they did during a sloppy 4-1 loss to Leeds United in Saturday's English Premiership match.

Newcastle boss Kenny Dalglish, already without his two leading strikers Alan Shearer, probably out until March, and Colombian Faustino Asprilla, a hat-trick hero from their 3-2 win over Barcelona, will

also be without two of his summer defensive purchases — Stuart Pearce and Italian Alessandro Pistone.

Pearce, the former England skipper who has not played since Newcastle's preliminary round draw at Croatia Zagreb, will be out for a further month after bursting a blood vessel in his hamstring.

Pistone, signed from Inter Milan in the summer, is also likely to be out for a further couple of weeks with an ankle injury that has not responded to treatment as quickly as had been hoped.

Eindhoven, who won the European Cup in 1988, have made a mixed start to their campaign, being thrashed by Group leaders Dynamo Kiev 3-1 at home and then drawing 2-2 away at Barcelona.

They certainly have the firepower to worry a Newcastle side that was fortunate to grab a 2-2 draw in Kiev. Veteran Belgian striker Luc Nilis feeds off Jonk and his midfield partner

and fellow international Philip Cocu.

Newcastle, who will play Danish striker Jon Dahl Tomasson alongside veteran Ian Rush, may benefit from the likely absence of winger Boudewijn Zenden, who is recovering from injury.

Barcelona, who have only one point from their first two matches, take on a Dynamo Kiev side which has provided the backbone of the vastly-improved Ukrainian national team.

The Catalan giants' Brazilian midfielder Giovanni, named in the squad after recovering from an injury sustained in September, said the match is "almost or die" for his side.

Manchester United, like compatriots Newcastle, also take on Dutch opposition in Feyenoord, who have made a stumbling start both to their domestic and Champions League Group B campaigns.

Juventus have two players suspended for Wednesday

night's game against Kosice — French midfielder Didier Deschamps and defender Ciro Ferrara.

The 1996 European Cup winners also have major injury worries over four players.

Italy's other club in Champions League action is Parma, who are preparing for a Group A clash with Borussia Dortmund — the team who beat Juventus in last season's final.

Bayern Munich and Paris Saint Germain meet in Munich in what could be the pivotal match of Group E with the French side desperate for three points to draw level with the German giants.

Munich, who have scored five goals and conceded only in their two Champions League matches thus far, will be without veteran Lothar Matthaus and French defender Bixente Lizarazu, who are still recovering from injury.

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Kurdish truce in north Iraq violated again, several killed

CAIRO (AP) — Rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq accused each other of violating a four-day cease-fire Tuesday but said the fighting lasted only a little while. One group claimed it killed several enemy guerrillas.

It was the second reported violation of the cease-fire between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) since they agreed to stop fighting late Friday.

As with the earlier violation, the latest one occurred near Shaqlawa, a town 40 kilometres northeast of Irbil, the provisional capital of the Kurdish autonomous region.

A PUK spokesman in Cairo told the Associated Press that KDP guerrillas tried to break through its lines near Shaqlawa "but were repulsed and driven back."

Spokesman Adnan Mufti

claimed several KDP guerrillas were killed. He gave no other details, and the claim, which could not be independently confirmed, was denied by KDP.

KDP spokesman, Safen Dizayee said in Ankara, Turkey, that it was the PUK that launched an attack on KDP forces in Shaqlawa.

"After an hour of fighting, they went back to their positions and there have been no cease-fire violations since then," Mr. Dizayee said.

The PUK and KDP have shared power in the Kurdish autonomous zone since it was set up by Western allies in 1991 after Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces crushed a Kurdish revolt.

On Saturday, the KDP accused the PUK of bombarding Shaqlawa with mortars, killing two KDP guerrillas. The PUK denied the report.

After years of fighting, the two sides had managed to

honour a cease-fire for one year until fighting erupted anew on Oct. 12, which was capped by Friday's truce.

On Monday, representatives of the PUK and the pro-Turkey KDP met in neighbouring Turkey's capital, Ankara, for peace talks hosted by U.S., British and Turkish mediators.

A point of contention is KDP's demand that PUK withdraw from the territory it gained in last week's fighting.

The PUK has refused, saying there will be no withdrawal unless KDP demonstrates its willingness to accept a political solution.

"We cannot withdraw and then come back all the time after seeing no improvement on the political arena," PUK representative in Ankara, Shazad Saib, said Saturday.

Fears that the deadlock would trigger fresh fighting

ended Tuesday after the KDP said it is willing to wait a little while longer to see if the mediators can persuade PUK to withdraw.

"They [the U.S., Britain, Turkey] have put in a lot of effort. We will respect that," KDP spokesman Mr. Dizayee said.

In a separate development, the PUK filed a complaint with the U.N. secretary general Tuesday, accusing Turkish forces of attacking PUK areas on Sept. 21. The complaint said 12 PUK guerrillas and eight civilians were killed.

Turkey denied similar accusations last week. The foreign ministry said Turkish forces target only Turkish Kurds who are fighting for a separate nation and often cross over to northern Iraq for sanctuary. Turkey has long accused the PUK of collaborating with the Turkish separatists.

Israelis mock Netanyahu with gas masks on his 48th birthday

TEL AVIV (AP) — Dozens of Israelis clad in gas masks wished Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a "secure" 48th birthday Tuesday and offered him a cake to remember victims of suicide bombings in a protest outside his home.

"Happy secure birthday," the demonstrators sang through their masks, mocking the rightwing leader elected in May 1996 on a promise to provide a "secure peace."

The protesters said the masks were meant to protect them from an imminent war that Mr. Netanyahu will bring on if he maintains his hardline policies towards the Arabs.

"We are fed up with his leadership, with him destroying the peace process," said demonstrator Sarit Ofek of the left-wing Peace Now movement. "He has been in

office too long. We hope he will spend his next birthday at home alone."

The protesters offered Mr. Netanyahu, who did not appear, a chocolate cake decorated with sprinkles and a large, memorial candle to remember the 21 victims of recent suicide bombings in Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu rose to power on Israeli discontent with the previous Labour government after suicide bombings in February and March 1996 claimed 58 victims.

Mr. Netanyahu's wife, Sarah, his children and aides surprised him somewhat more pleasantly with a birthday party at his office when he arrived, having avoided the demonstration.

The rightwing leader was born in Tel Aviv in 1949, the son of history professor Benzion Netanyahu who

took his family to the U.S. after his views were judged too rightwing to get him work in Israeli universities.

Educated in the U.S., Mr. Netanyahu began his career at the Israeli embassy there in 1982 and rose to the position of ambassador at the U.N. before returning in 1988 to begin work in the Likud party.

After his election, Mr. Netanyahu said he would follow the Oslo peace accords started by his predecessors but has halted their implementation, insisting Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat smother terror groups.

Although peace talks resumed on Oct. 6 after a seven-month freeze, they remain stuck on Mr. Netanyahu's insistence settlement expansion will continue and on the question of how to continue the implementation of the Oslo accords.

Jewish Agency leader asks not to alienate Israel's loyal donors

TEL AVIV (AP) — Most of world Jewry's donations for settling 800,000 settlers in Israel came from Reform and Conservative Jews, and Israel must not alienate them with new laws belittling their beliefs, the head of the Jewish Agency said Tuesday.

The Jewish Agency chief, Abraham Burg, was referring to proposed legislation that would encode into law the current practice of recognising only conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis in Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week he would back such legislation if it attempts at compromise failed.

Reform and Conservative Jews, who make up a majority of affiliated Jews in the U.S., feel such legislation is delegitimising them. The Orthodox who control religious affairs in Israel are trying to block attempts by the reform and conservative streams to win recognition in

Israel. Mr. Burg warned that such legislation would divide the Jewish people. "He who passes a law that alienates 65 per cent of the Jewish people will create a situation where Israel will no longer be the homeland of the Jews as envisioned by the Zionist movement," Mr. Burg said in a statement.

Mr. Burg noted that 75 per cent of the donations from world Jewry used in the past decade to settle some 800,000 in Israel came from Reform and Conservative Jews.

"The material backing is in addition to the very important political support which these Jews have provided to Israel over the years," Mr. Burg said.

The Jewish Agency is the link between Israel and diaspora Jews and has taken a leading role in bringing new settlers to Israel and settling them there.

Mr. Burg criticised the national religious party, the

patron of the Jewish settlement movement in the government, for trying to block recognition of the reform and conservative streams.

"What motivated them is the fear of the stranger — the Arab — and hatred of the different — the Jew," Mr. Burg said. "They are not able to embrace a 'Judaism of love' and that's why they have no future."

Israel's ambassador to the U.S., Eliyahu Ben-Elissar, had a similar word of caution for the government.

Israel's Channel 2 TV said Mr. Ben-Elissar wrote to the Foreign Ministry over the weekend warning that the conversion law would distance the U.S. Jewish communities from Israel.

"Israel will not be able to expect their political support," Mr. Ben-Elissar warned in the letter, adding that support for Israel in Congress would also wane.

Mandela honours Egypt for its help during apartheid era

CAIRO (R) — South African President Nelson Mandela, who first visited Egypt 35 years ago as a freedom fighter, Tuesday thanked Egypt for its support in the struggle against apartheid rule in his country.

President Mandela, the first South African leader to come to power in all-race elections, held talks with President Hosni Mubarak on the second day of his three-day visit.

There was no immediate word on whether they discussed Libya, where Mr. Mandela is due to make a visit criticised by the United States. South African Foreign

Minister Alfred Nzo Monday called for an end to U.N. sanctions against Libya.

In a ceremony at a Cairo palace, Mr. Mandela gave Mubarak the order of good hope, the highest award a South African president can give citizens of other countries. In return, the Egyptian president honoured Mr. Mandela with the collar of the Nile.

"It is a great honour indeed to receive so high an award from a country with an ancient and distinguished history, from a people who stood with us in our struggle for freedom," Mr. Mandela said

in a speech.

President Mandela first visited Egypt as a freedom fighter in 1962 and met Jamal Abdul Nasser, then Egypt's president. His next visit was in 1990, after his release from a South African prison.

"We came here to say that the people of South Africa would never forget the support of the Egyptian government and people — and today once again we thank you from the bottom of our heart," Mr. Mandela said.

"President Mubarak's government will continue to be a force for cooperation between our peoples," he said.

Warren Christopher.

Israelis, Arabs and world leaders gather at peace centre opening

TEL AVIV (AP) — It's a bittersweet reunion for Israelis and Palestinians who negotiated the historic Mideast peace agreements, only to see many of their achievements unravel.

The peacemakers, joined by Arab leaders, are getting back together for the inauguration of the Peres Centre for peace founded by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Monday's gathering stood in sharp contrast to bumpy U.S. efforts to get negotiations back on track after months of crisis. U.S. Mideast mediator Dennis Ross was shuttling between Israeli and Palestinian leaders, but chances for a breakthrough were slim.

Yossi Beilin, one of the chief Israeli architects of the 1993 and 1995 autonomy agreements with the Palestinians, said Monday's inauguration could help improve the atmosphere.

"It is important to be speaking of peace," Mr. Beilin said. "There has been no talk of peace here for a long time."

Mr. Beilin's peace partners — Palestinian Parliament Speaker Ahmad Qureia and Norwegian Terje Larsen — were also attending the ceremony. Uri Savir, a top Israeli negotiator, heads the centre under Mr. Peres who was ousted by Israel's hardline leader, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in May 1996 elections.

The centre's first project is the construction of a Palestinian-Israeli industrial park on the edge of the autonomous Gaza Strip that is to provide up to 50,000 jobs for Palestinians.

Mr. Peres said the centre also hopes to match up eight Palestinian towns with Israeli and European cities and to advance agriculture projects such as growing wheat for an Italian pasta company.

"If negotiations get stuck there will be even more of a need for this," Mr. Peres said on Israel Radio.

The centre has won worldwide support. Mikhail Gorbachev, Jimmy Carter, Henry Kissinger and John Major are on the international board of governors, though not attending the opening ceremony.

Among those celebrating with Mr. Peres on Monday were many Palestinian cabinet ministers and security officials. Minister of Water and Irrigation Muhsen Haddadin, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa, German Parliament Speaker Rita Süssmuth, and former U.S. Secretary of State



ICON SINGS AT DRIVER'S FUNERAL: Stevie Wonder sings at the funeral of limo driver Charles Lee Redmond Monday in Las Vegas. Redmond, who drove for the music icon when the singer visited Las Vegas, was murdered by a stripper in a case similar to the movie 'Fatal Attraction,' according to Las Vegas police. Redmond, who was married and father of a 2-year-old daughter, was stalked and then fatally shot by Nicole Thorton, who then shot herself October 13, police said (Reuters photo)

Asian, African states say Saudis beating, jailing illegal workers

DUBAI (AP) — Asian and African nations accused Saudi Arabia Tuesday of beating and jailing illegal workers and residents and called on the kingdom to ease its crackdown.

Diplomats from the embassies of Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Somalia and Nigeria in Riyadh said they filed complaints to the Saudi Foreign Ministry after receiving reports that some of their citizens had been beaten and imprisoned by Saudi security forces. The diplomats spoke on condition of anonymity.

The diplomats said they demanded an end to the harassment and asked the Saudi government to give them more time to arrange for illegal workers and their families to return home.

One African diplomat said that Saudi police have surrounded entire neighbourhoods in Jeddah and were raiding homes and shops to

search for illegal workers. The diplomat spoke on condition that he was not further identified.

There was no immediate comment from Saudi authorities.

The appeals came after a three-month amnesty for illegal workers expired Thursday. Saudi authorities have launched a crackdown to uncover illegal workers and residents that remain in the country.

The Saudi crackdown is part of a government campaign to better regulate the labour market, provide more job opportunities for Saudis and reduce the number of crimes committed by foreigners, mainly theft and fraud.

The Saudis also want to reduce the amount of money foreign workers send out of the country — estimated at more than \$16 billion a year.

The embassies said they will appeal to the international community to protect their nationals.

There were an estimated 700,000 illegal workers in Saudi Arabia before the crackdown. About half entered the oil-rich kingdom as Muslim pilgrims and stayed after their visas expired.

Some 500,000 are believed to have either left or applied to return home before the end of the amnesty.

Some 200,000 illegal workers remain. They and their employers face up to six months in prison and a maximum fine of \$27,000.

Most of the illegal workers are from the Indian sub-continent. Somalia, Egypt and Sudan.

Saudi Arabia has a population of 18 million of which six million are foreigners. Some 4.3 million foreigners have work permits in the kingdom.

Turkish rights group leader sentenced to jail

ANKARA (AFP) — A Turkish court on Tuesday sentenced the head of the country's leading human rights group to one year in jail — the day before he was due to submit a report on prison conditions to the justice minister.

The Anatolian news agency said the Ankara court found seven people, among them human rights association, IHD, Chairman Akin Bridal, guilty of "inciting hatred and division by showing differences of class, race and regional origin," in speeches made in 1996.

The court found that the defendants had spread propaganda for Kurdish rebels and provoked hatred between ethnic groups in the speeches.

Bridal was also fined \$2,300. The six other accused were handed jail sentences of between one and two years.

Bridal is due to submit a report on prison conditions

to Justice Minister Oltan Sungurlu on Wednesday, the IHD said.

An IHD official said Bridal would go ahead and hand over the report as no order had been issued to send him to jail immediately.

The IHD, established in 1986, has long drawn official anger for its accusations of widespread human rights abuses, which Ankara says damage the country's image abroad.

Rashid says Ka'abneh case closed since she did not file complaint

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid Tuesday said he did not think the attack against a woman candidate for the Nov. 4 election on Monday was prompted by any political reasons or related to the elections.

Mr. Rashid said that the security authorities consider the "matter" closed since Wisaf Ka'abneh, a candidate in the Central Bedouin District, did not file a complaint.

Ms. Ka'abneh Monday

said that unidentified gunmen opened fire at her car and her driver was injured and had to have a bullet removed from his leg.

Ms. Ka'abneh, a former policewoman and a lawyer by profession, is the only woman among 20 candidates in this constituency, a stronghold of the powerful Bani Sakher tribe.

"The attack is not politically motivated," said Mr. Rashid. "Nor was it related to elections. The incident was apparently carried out to frighten her and make her pull out from the race," he said.

"She did not file a complaint and you can ask her why," the minister said without elaborating. Ms. Ka'abneh was not immediately available for comment.

On Monday, Ms. Ka'abneh told the Jordan Times that she accused no one and said that she will not file a case against anyone.

Security officials said that they suspect that the attack was carried out by "relatives" of the candidate but declined to say whether any suspects were arrested.



Canadian badbreath test something to sniff at

VANCOUVER (R) — Canadians worried their bad breath may be a social liability can have their mouth odor checked at a new breath-testing clinic. The University of British Columbia, which announced its bad-breath service on Monday, says a patient will have their breath scientifically analysed for halitosis — and then checked by a human sniffer. "This clinic provides an objective measure for people concerned about their breath," said Don Brunette, associate dean of the university's dentistry faculty. To conduct the tests, staff suck air from a patient's mouth with a syringe and use gas chromatography to check for the presence of sulphur compounds that cause bad breath. A visit to the clinic costs U.S. \$110.

Italian holy virgin cries tears of olive oil

SANNICOLA, Italy (AFP) — Tears that flowed from a paper-mache Virgin Mary this summer, attracting thousands of pilgrims to this village in southern Italy, have turned out to be nothing more than olive oil, church authorities said Tuesday. Bishop Vittorio Fusco said analysis of the clear, oily liquid seen on the Madonna's face was indeed a "substance like vegetable oil, very similar to olive oil." Fusco had rushed to the Saint Peter and Paul Church in Sannicola to take a sample of the liquid after the statue was seen to be 'crying' in August, a phenomenon which village priest Don Gino Ruerto claimed began in June.

Britain's Fergie denies writing to queen

LONDON (R) — Britain's Duchess of York denied a newspaper report on Monday that she had appealed to Queen Elizabeth for forgiveness for her past misdemeanours. A spokeswoman for the royal outcast said a report in the Sun newspaper that she had written to the queen following Princess Diana's traumatic funeral was wrong. "We have spoken to the duchess, and she is slightly bemused... She did not actually write to the queen," the spokeswoman said. She said the only letter the duchess had written was to Prince Charles, heir to the throne and former husband of the late Princess Diana.

Evita returns — and she is miserable

BUENOS AIRES (R) — "I will return and I will be millions," Argentina's legendary former First Lady Evita Peron once told the crowds, according to popular history. She returned on Monday — in the form of one million one-peso coins. The central bank launched the coins with her profile to mark half a century of women's vote in Argentina. "Argentine women will have the same political rights and the same duties that are agreed on or imposed on Argentine men," read the law granting women the vote in 1947 which was promoted by the wife of former President Juan Peron.

Yeltsin's plane almost too big for Moldova

CHISINAU (R) — Russian officials have been puzzling for days over how to solve a key issue ahead of the summit of former Soviet Republics to be held in Moldova this week. The problem? Whether Russian President Boris Yeltsin's plane will be able to land. So it was with huge relief they discovered on Monday that the modest airport in the Moldovan capital Chisinau was high enough to accommodate his Ilyushin-96 — by sending a similar one all the way from Moscow for a test landing.